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War Chess Moves

In a world accustomed to looking for hidden meanings, the new Soviet-German treaties probably were weighted with more significance than they could bear. The trade agreement is simply an extension of the one announced at the beginning of the war; the results of that had already been assessed as of minor importance. The news for a few hours was taken to mean that Russia might have thrown Bulgaria to the Nazi wolves, but the very next day the Kremlin said it had not been consulted by Hitler about Bulgaria and had given no consent to invasion. The Bulgarian Foreign Minister reiterated that the nation would defend its independence against all comers, and Turkey again let it be known that if German troops moved in, she would resist. Balkan weather, too, is a powerful opponent of blitzkrieg before April.

Recent German troop movements have led to one tangible result—the use of dive bombers against the British navy in the Mediterranean. This is calculated to help Italy in the African campaign, but Graziani is already hopelessly beaten, and the limits of General Wavell's advance will be set only by his own estimate of gains and sacrifices. Perhaps it is time to consider a possibility of a wholly different sort. Instead of planning new aggression in the Mediterranean, Germany may be bolstering her southern borders against an expected British offensive. She may merely desire to take out insurance against a drive northward through the Balkans or Italy, while she concentrates on the main task of knocking England out of the war.

Mr. Marshall Destroys Himself

American isolationists—and we do not doubt that there are many thousands of sincere and patriotic citizens in this category—had a heartbreaking experience on the night of January 9. Verne Marshall, head of the No Foreign War Committee, was scheduled to appear on the popular nationwide radio program, the Town Hall of the Air, and support his views in a debate. But for some obscure reason, when Mr. Marshall got before the microphone, he could not collect his scattered intellectual forces sufficiently to give the argument in favor of his position. He wasted a lot of his precious time reciting his genealogy, inviting people in the audience to come up and fight, "although I am twenty pounds under weight," making reiterated efforts to give the name and address of his committee in an appeal for funds, and scolding the chairman for not giving him more time. It was a pathetic appearance; if any man could destroy his public reputation in forty-five minutes, Mr. Marshall must have done so. About the only thing he made clear was that he doesn't understand the dictionary meaning of the word "agenda." Since then, his stock has been going down like an express elevator. Despite promises to throw open his books to anybody, he refused to tell who was behind him or to clear up his relation to W. R. Davis, the international entrepreneur with German-Mexican affiliations. It is little short of tragic that in the national debates now in progress, the loudest voices on one side—even though we believe it to be the wrong side—should be people like these.

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Communist Diversion

The Communist Party of the U.S.A. created a mild sensation the other day by purging a member of its ruling triumvirate, Clarence Hathaway, editor of The Daily Worker. To outsiders, and probably to most party members as well, the reason is mysterious. Hathaway has been a completely loyal and adroit follower of the twisting Stalinist line. At any rate, he is lucky that he is in America instead of a Moscow prison.

Meanwhile the party continues to organize resistance to the effort of the democracies to defeat Hitlerism. A "people's" conference in London emphasized opposition to the government and a demand that it sue for peace. A mass meeting in Madison Square Garden opposed the President and aid to Britain. We should be wary of saying that people who adopt this attitude are necessarily Nazi agents, for if so we should have to include Senators Wheeler, Taft and Vandenberg, Mr. Landon and many lesser Americans. It is enough to point out that "objectively," as the Communists are fond of saying, they are playing the game of the blackest reactionaries in Europe and America.

Steel Balks

It looks as if the steel masters were digging in to resist plant expansion. Obviously inspired articles in the business and editorial pages of the papers represent their opposition. Every argument used in these articles is incorrect; some of the most important considerations are ignored altogether. They try to make a mystery of the demand for greater capacity, asking who is behind it and for what hidden motives. The fact is that the experts of the NDAC and the President himself have called for greater capacity. They reiterate that the largest possible demand for Britain's use is 18,000,000 tons, whereas this is only the amount necessary to enable her to match equally Hitler's present superiority, and makes no allowance for future bombing of British furnaces. They account for the fact that the industry has recently been operating at nearly full capacity by alleging that stocks are being built up, though as a matter of fact they are declining.

The nub of their position finally comes out in the declaration that if a shortage arises, civilian industries must be rationed. The calculations of the National Resources Board and of the National Economic and Social Planning Association that an increase in the national income will cause a greater civilian demand for steel they throw aside as irrelevant. They are so afraid of excess capacity that they are willing to put the country on a no-iron ration, crippling housing, automobiles and railroads.

Did not the TNEC criticize the steel industry for excess capacity a few months ago, they inquire? The answer is it did not; the cost of idle capacity was pointed out in order to emphasize the fact that a monopolistic price policy restricts output and prevents an economy of abundance. We are tempted to say to the steel industry, All right, stand pat and we'll see who is right. The trouble is that at this moment in history the nation cannot afford to let steel be wrong.

The Nazis' Secret Cache

Many months ago, H. R. Knickerbocker of International News Service published charges that high Nazi officials had smuggled large sums out of Germany and cached them in banks all over the world for their personal use if they were ever forced to flee from the homeland. These charges received sensational verification in a New York federal court a few days ago when a man who had done the dirty work for the Nazi chieftains was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a $2,500 fine. The charge against him was using a falsified American passport.

Despite their anti-Semitism, these leading Nazis—Goering, Schacht, Goebbels, Ley and others—did not hesitate to employ a Rumanian Jew, Isidore Lazarus, alias Lee Lane. Persons in Germany—mostly Jews, of course—intending to flee the country transferred their property to him in cash. When they finally got out, he gave them back a small part of it and turned over the rest to the Nazis. Some of these funds, in the banks of the United States and other neutral countries, were used for propaganda and espionage; the rest was evidently salted away, just as our own gangsters sometimes hide part of their earnings for use in emergencies. The Nazis of course deny this story, as they did when Mr. Knickerbocker first published it. When a denial issues a Nazi, that may be news; but not the other way round.

Mr. Hearst Can't Take It

W. R. Hearst believes in free speech for newspapers—or at least he incessantly says he does, in his periodicals. Evidently, however, he doesn't extend the same right to motion-picture companies. RKO-Radio has just made a movie, "Citizen Kane," the work of Orson Welles, which deals with the life of a millionaire publisher. Mr. Hearst thinks it is about himself and has demanded that the $800,000 product be scrapped, under penalty that RKO-Radio will henceforth be boycotted in all his newspapers and especially in the syndicated column of his ineffable Louella O. Parsons.

Mr. Welles insists that the motion picture is not a cartoon of Mr. Hearst; but even if it were, we think the aged publisher would have done better to show a little sportsmanship and keep still. After all, it is something of a compliment to be considered such a vast and monolithic public character that movies and novels are written about you. By trying to put the screws on RKO-Radio, Mr. Hearst has probably done himself more harm than would have ensued if he had let nature take its course. We hope RKO-Radio will have courage enough to stand up to Mr. Hearst and

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end the intimidation of all the Hollywood studios by his newspapers through Miss Parsons. If the producers would once say "Boo!" to Mr. Hearst, they would probably find that their fear of him has long been based on an exaggerated idea of his influence. They might take comfort from the fact that for the past forty years Hearst has been on the losing side of most of the crusades he has undertaken.

Central American Backfire

Hitler has discovered that democracy in Central America would be a splendid thing, or rather, that revolutions in the name of democracy would be. The omnipresent Nazi agents are reported to have well prepared revolts ready to explode in all six Central American republics when the button is pressed. It will presumably be pressed if the United States is involved in warlike complications with the Axis, when a Central American backfire would be useful. The present stirring up of vicious attacks on President Roosevelt's good-neighbor policy is preliminary. The bloody Christmas uprising in Guatemala, a premature explosion, has caused excitement in neighboring countries far greater than attends one of the customary settling of accounts between a Central American clique in office and one that would like to take its place. Its effect has been a tightening of all the present regimes, notably those in Nicaragua and Honduras. With the exception of the Costa Rican government they are of course dictatorial. Hitler pretending to plot for democracy is always an interesting although not a novel spectacle. In every corner in the world—including the larger piece of territory known as North America—democracy in fact and not in name is the only possible foundation for a sound defense against Nazi trouble-making.

News Notes of a Week

Albanian air grew even more unwholesome for Italian generals. Ubaldo Soddu, commander in Albania since November 9, was relieved for "reasons of health," and General Ugo Cavellero, noted for his loyalty to the party, was given an opportunity to check the amazing Greeks, whose advance had progressed beyond Klisura on the way to Valona. . . . Reports of an Armistice Day riot in Paris, with German troops firing on French civilians, sifted through the censorship. . . . The RAF staged daylight raids over invasion ports with fighter-plane escorts. The news that planes had machine-gunned German soldiers in coastal trenches suggested that the fear of invasion might not be confined to the English side of the Channel. . . . Japanese-controlled Thailand (Siam) and French Indo-China became more deeply involved in their border warfare. Haiphong, principal Indo-China seaport, would be most useful to Japan for an attack on the Netherlands East Indies.

Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's annual message to the New York City Council hinted that an "emergency" might make it impossible for him to serve out his term. There are few Washington jobs that the Little Flower has not been mentioned for, but the man in Washington who will pick the particular job isn't talking. . . . Republican Party politics ran on the rocks, with Landon attacking Willkie on foreign-policy grounds and Taft and Dewey reported combining to prevent the "standard bearer" from choosing the new national chairman. . . . As an anti-climax to much discussion of ways of building up the United States merchant marine, the S.S. Manhattan got stuck in the sand off the coast of Florida.

The Battle of 1776

H. R. 1776, the bill to aid the democracies by giving the President power to lend or lease to them military equipment and war resources, has furnished the occasion for the first major legislative and opinion battle of the year. Against it will rally every force opposed to the anti-Nazi cause, every force opposed to a strong democratic state in America under presidential leadership, every force trying to ride adventurously to power by exploiting the symbols of "peace" and of congressional "independence" of the executive. Already isolationist and appeaser, Bundist and Coughlinite, Tory Republican and Communist have united to cry "war" and "dictatorship" against the bill.

How much success will they have? It is too early to answer with certainty. But we can say with reasonable confidence that the bill will pass; and that, while in the course of congressional bargaining it will probably be amended at several points, its major purpose and method will be left intact. The purpose is all-out aid to Britain and China and Greece, and other countries which may in the future be similarly threatened by Nazi aggression. The method is to translate this already accepted foreign policy of the nation into reality by giving the President a broad range of discretion for its application.

Let us ask what are the essential questions involved in the plan.

Is This the Right Method?—There are some who, while agreeing with the need for American aid to Britain, think that the lease-lend plan is patently a dodge for avoiding the Johnson Act, that there is little difference between lending munitions and lending money, and that the best plan would be to give the munitions to Britain as an outright gift. There is an appeal in this plea for candor. Yet the lease-lend plan has merits of its own. However the war ends, America will have need of strong armaments in the immediate post-war years, and the lease-lend plan is a way of

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ensuring the return to us of at least a substantial portion of the armaments we have provided, or their equivalent.

Is It Safe to Grant the President This Much Power? We think it is, with one qualification. That is that a definite time limit—say two years—should be set on the grant, renewable by Congress if it believes that the crisis still exists at the end of that period. That would make it clear that the power is a definite delegation by Congress to the President, for a clear purpose and a limited period. Early in their history the Romans learned that if a constitutional government is to survive it must give plenary power to a single person during an emergency. But they learned also that at the end of that emergency Cincinnatus had to return to the plow.

In making the bill public, the President had a remarkably clear and persuasive press conference, putting unmistakably on record his conception of the nature of the powers that the bill confers on him. They are not *prerogative* powers in the sense that they exist independently of Congress. They cannot be carried out except by congressional appropriations, and Congress can, by withholding the appropriations, express its distrust of the way in which the powers are being used. And the bill does not preclude the establishment of an independent agency through which the government can get collateral for the loan or lease of armaments, whether in the form of naval bases or other concessions.

It would be ironic if the struggle over the bill were still in progress on Lincoln's birthday. For the Lincoln presidency is America's supreme example of how a democracy can meet the greatest crisis of its history by a resort to extraordinary presidential power without becoming a personal tyranny. Lincoln knew how to cut to the heart of a problem. "The question," he wrote in one of his great letters, "is either simply a question who shall decide, or an affirmation that nobody shall decide, what the public safety does require" in a national crisis.

If the opponents of the bill today mean that *nobody* shall decide, they are the great enemies of our democracy. For the day is past when we can still believe that the essence of democratic government is the lack of any focus for the responsibility of making decisions, or when we can still believe that, to survive, a democracy must be weak. But if they ask *who* shall decide, then surely the President is the natural and logical choice. It is in the very nature of a lightning war that the landscape of battle changes from day to day. For us to appeal to Congress every time we had to give aid to the democracies would mean that the aid would never come in time. Congressional battles on every move in foreign policy might well prove for America as fatal as the successive changes of ministries proved for France.

Will the Plan Increase the Danger of War? – There are those who will never be convinced that an affirmative foreign policy for America is not warmongering. But we believe that the vast majority have come to accept the logic of the President's recent speeches—that energetic action by America in aid of Britain will reduce rather than increase our physical involvement in war. Senator Wheeler says that the President is aiming to plow under every fourth American boy. The real danger of such isolation comes from a policy of fecklessness and fear such as the European democracies followed before the war, and such as the Wheelers are asking us to follow today in America—a policy which would leave us to face alone a victorious Nazi-dominated Europe.

Will It Strengthen the President's Hand? – We believe it will. Not only will it enable America to energize the anti-Nazi forces throughout Europe; it will also enable the President to speak with authority when he asks the British leaders for their war aims and their peace terms. Without such a statement from England, American opinion will never be unified behind an affirmative anti-Nazi foreign policy.

Is There Time to Lose? – Wendell Willkie has come out in support of the bill, but with a warning against rushing it through Congress. We cannot agree with him. If ever there was need for speed, it is now. It is far later than Mr. Willkie thinks. The Nazi war lords will make in the next few months their desperate effort through invasion of England to end what may become for them a protracted and losing war. Speed is now required not only in Pittsburgh and Detroit, but in Washington as well. The Battle of 1776 may prove the decisive battle of the war.

Brass Tacks

THE BUDGET MESSAGE is far more important than the President's address to Congress on the state of the Union, for while the latter is full of fine generalities, the former shows what he proposes that this nation do to provide for defense and internal security.

An annual expenditure of $17,500,000,000, of which 65 percent is to be for defense, may seem large in comparison even with New Deal budgets of the past. But this is not the time to look back; the real question is whether the appropriations are adequate to the need. Germany is spending on arms upwards of half her national income and Britain almost as great a proportion. The $10,811,000,000 allocated to defense in this budget will compare with a national income of not less than $75,000,000,000 and probably more. Defense will take, therefore, not more than 14 percent of our total product.

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It is true that this does not include the cost of what we are to lend or lease to Britain. But the sum of that in 1942 can hardly exceed $5,000,000,000. Shall we be doing all we can by devoting less than 20 percent of our income to the struggle against Hitler? Perhaps, in view of the inevitably slow expansion of war industry, that is all we can find a way to spend without undue waste. But in view of the President's statement that "the sum of all these defense efforts should be geared to the productive capacity of this nation expanded to literally its utmost efforts," we should hope that it will be possible to spend more before the year is over. A look at the figures gives rise to the fear that, like France and Britain, we are not soon enough awake to the requirements of the task.

Mr. Roosevelt is on firm ground in refusing to cut non-military expenses drastically in order to support the military burden. Conservative congressmen may fume, but defense requires, as he says, "jobs, health and security to strengthen the bulwarks of democracy." Within this limitation, he has been able to cut $600,000,000 from civilian items, in ways most of which now appear quite feasible. Reductions are not scheduled for social-security programs, which on the contrary should be expanded. Because of the better domestic market for farm products, it is estimated that the agricultural program may cost $45,000,000 less. The big cut comes in the WPA. We must hope that the $400,000,000 drop will be justified by the increase in employment.

The rest of the reduction is made in civilian public works. It is wise, as the President says, not to allow materials and labor necessary for defense output to be diverted to less essential works, and it is desirable to have a backlog of projects to which we may turn when defense production ceases. When we read, however, that such measures as flood control are being postponed, we wonder whether the productive capacity of this country is not really large enough for both. The truth is that the nation has never created enough useful public works, irrespective of the need to absorb the unemployed. There will be no lack of good projects when peace comes, even if we do not allow floods to ravage us in the meantime.

There remain the President's remarks about taxation, borrowing and the national debt, and on each of these questions we believe he is right in principle, though his proposals as yet lack specification. He is for heavier taxes based on ability to pay, but against higher consumption taxes before full production capacity is reached. Since we could not completely finance defense on a pay-as-you-go basis without taxes of the latter kind, he is rightly opposed to balancing the budget "as long as unused capacity is available and as long as idle labor can be employed."

Mr. Roosevelt correctly points to the inadequacies of the excess-profits tax because "it is the fixed policy of the government that no citizen should make any abnormal net profit out of national defense." He again, and soundly, reiterates his belief in the need for long-term tax reform by readjustment of the "federal-state-local fiscal relationship."

Of course the national debt must rise. The debt limit is a useless barrier, since Congress in effect fixes the size of the debt by its appropriation and tax measures. Much as we may dislike to see it expand, there is no need to worry as long as the *burden*—not the total—does not grow out of proportion to the national income. As the President cogently points out, the rise of $30,000,000,000 in the national income under the New Deal was accompanied by an increase of only $400,000,000 in annual interest charges. He might have added that in Britain the national debt is almost twice as large as the national income, while our debt is only 60 percent of our income. The only real balance sheet of our economic performance in the months ahead lies not in financial accounting but in the goods and services we can turn out, and in what we do with them.

Scientist of Letters

JAMES JOYCE died in Switzerland, the last truly neutral country in western Europe. Since his escape from France, he had been living with his family in Zurich—in the same house, we are told, that they occupied in the World War. He was there twenty-six years ago when Romain Rolland, also a refugee in Switzerland, published "Above the Battle." But Joyce was not so much above as completely outside the battle. He was working as much as sixteen hours a day on the writing of "Ulysses," a task that seemed more important to him than the fate of the warring countries. After leaving Ireland in 1904, he never permitted himself to make a statement on any political issue. He was the leading representative in our time, and perhaps in all times, of the theory of literature as a pure art almost completely divorced from society.

Literature as a pure art approaches the nature of a pure science. And Joyce was also the great research scientist of letters, handling words with the same freedom and originality that Einstein handles mathematical symbols. The sounds, patterns, roots and connotations of words interested him much more than their definite meanings. One might say that he invented a non-Euclidean geometry of language; and that he worked over it with doggedness and devotion, as if in a laboratory far removed from the noises of the street. This does not mean that he neglected to present human beings in his novels. Stephen Dedalus and his father, Leopold and Molly Bloom, even H. C. Earwicker of "Finnegans Wake," are figures that will not be forgotten. But they are figures that are analyzed

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exhaustively in repose rather than being presented in action. And the side of them that held Joyce's interest was their subconscious—that is, the side that medical scientists like to deal with. Moreover, even the strongest of his characters seem dwarfed by the great apparatus of learning that he brings to bear on them. They are almost like atoms being smashed by a 250-ton cyclotron.

These are some of the reasons why Joyce was not a writer of the same magnitude as Tolstoy or Stendhal or Dickens or any of the great men whose subject was human actions in their social background. In his own field, however, he was absolutely without an equal. There are very few serious novels of the last twenty years that do not show traces of his influence, even if only at third hand. The writers of the world owe him an enormous debt for making discoveries that have opened new horizons even to those who completely disagree with Joyce's idea of literature. They will miss him all the more because, in the hard years that lie ahead of us, it is doubtful whether any great scientist of letters will have the opportunity to carry on his work. Perhaps there will not even be neutral countries to which they can escape.

An Oversea Railway

PERHAPS the refugees need a Harriet Beecher Stowe. It is said there were only 200,000 determined abolitionists in the North at any one time preceding the War Between the States. Yet these Americans evolved underground railways where we evolve committees; they actually led men and women to freedom, enduring the frown of their own laws. There must be many times 200,000 Americans who believe ardently that refugees fleeing Hitler should be allowed to attain sanctuary. The practical results have been pitiably small. Even though our government is officially in sympathy with the refugees, little is done to help them. Does our arsenal of democracy intend to wait until someone writes a "Pastor Niemoeller's Cabin"?

It seems absurd to have to make a case for the refugees, or even to feel compelled to print a piece about them. No one will disagree with it and (on average) nothing will be done, either. The exchange of notes on the issue between our State Department and "France" is simply another case of human beings dropping out of sight among the index cards, or button, button, who has the visa? Secretary Hull is right in insisting that refugees in unoccupied "France" who possess American visas be allowed to leave; but Vichy dares not let them leave (though many are massed in Marseilles) because Hitler desires them to stay until he can sort them out. Meanwhile, Vichy wants to get rid of "non-political" refugees, that is, German Jews now in need of a second escape from the Nazis. Here again Secretary Hull is right in refusing to be a party to a system by which Hitler manufactures selected refugees for us to take, a continuous-flow production technique and a streamlined horror. Yet the two "rights" here add up to the wrong of continued peril to the refugees. We are not getting the ones who have visas; we will not take the others; none, therefore, can leave.

America must save the refugees or lose some thermal units of its moral heat as the asserted geographic base of democracy, its planetary home. France's refugee problem, however tangled at the moment, is in part a heritage of her past love of freedom, a testimonial to her historic open-door policy in human relations. Even the "France" of today can in some degree be proud of the problem; it speaks for her lost civilization. We cannot take the torch of freedom from France without taking her refugees, too, else freedom is only a word for us. Sometimes freedom is a broken old man, stepping off a ship with a bundle of clothes. The way to America must be opened. We are sending food to France. Let a proper refugee policy in Vichy be made the purchase price for this relief. Let the food ship come back with people. Why not? When the multitudes of Europe learn of this "deal" they will know what we stand for, better than many speeches could tell them. Are we afraid of the logical consequences of the ideals we stencil on our banners? We cannot pick and choose among battles for liberty; the world thrusts them upon us and we must take them as they come or quit the field.

The refugee situation is such a battle. "Sorry" is no answer. We must break the way open with passion and ingenuity. We can afford more experience than we have in the fight for freedom, and this would be an enriching one.

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The Race Against Hitler

This is the second of a series of articles reporting on what is for Americans the most important thing going on in the world—the effort to rearm this country and give adequate supplies to Great Britain. —THE EDITORS

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, in his historic Message to Congress, emphasized the fact which everyone already knew—that the American armament effort is on the whole not proceeding at a satisfactory rate.

Those who have looked into the matter know that many bottlenecks have been found. The War and Navy Departments are struggling with red tape. There is still duplication of activities, waste and inefficiency. Manufacturers are reluctant to increase their plants. Too many people are obsessed with the idea of "business as usual."

The President asked an appropriation for the next fiscal year of about ten billion dollars. To this will be added perhaps five billions more for the lease-lend scheme to help Great Britain. Combined, these two items amount to about one-sixth of our national income for the next year. But Germany spends one-half her national income on war, plus enormous amounts from the conquered countries of Europe. Even in England, they have at last got up to a point where about one-half of all production is for war purposes.

As a matter of fact, we seem to be recapitulating all of Great Britain's mistakes. Before the war, and during its first eight months, the military authorities in England refused, or were unable, to think in large enough terms. They kept making successive plans, each a little bigger than the last, and each immediately thrust aside because it was inadequate to the needs of the moment.

Profiteering went on in a shocking fashion; we are even now not sure that it has been entirely eliminated.

The steel industry, as an example, refused to introduce modern technological methods in any plant because these would put at a disadvantage the outmoded ones.

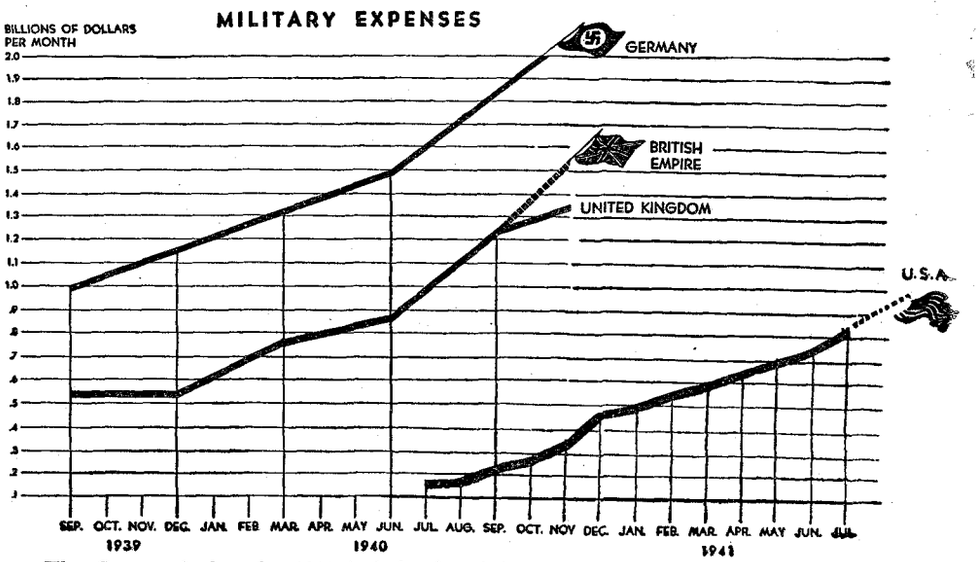
There, as here, manufacturers refused to build enough new plants, or to build them big enough, or to expand existing factories sufficiently. It took almost superhuman efforts to force wholesale subcontracting. This plan, called "bits and pieces," is roughly the same as the Reuther plan for using idle automobile plants, and the proposals by Morris L. Cooke. In England, it has proved a brilliant success. Under it, the number of persons employed in the airplane industry shot forward from 60,000 to 180,000, and production was tremendously expanded. The resistance to it was the same as in the United States. It combined inertia, unwillingness to take a lot of trouble and reluctance to farm out any but the least profitable operations. In this country there is also hostility to any plan, no matter how good, that is proposed by a labor union.

It will be heartbreaking if Americans insist on repeating Britain's mistakes to the bitter end—heartbreaking and excessively dangerous, since it may spell defeat for Britain and mortal danger for ourselves.

Under these circumstances, The New Republic suggests that our government should immediately send a committee of experts to Great Britain to learn how she has managed to increase her output so far beyond our own level. This committee should include technicians, industrialists and representatives of American unions. It should make a brief but thorough study of what England is doing. It should send back its findings from day to day as rapidly as possible, and at the earliest practicable moment, it should come home and go to work applying the British lessons in this country.

We refuse to admit that Americans are unwilling to learn from anybody's painful experience except their own. There is no logical reason why we should hamper ourselves needlessly by declining to take good advice.

It is almost literally true that there is not a moment to lose.



The German budget for 1940 includes $300,000,000 a month levied on France by the terms of the armistice, plus an additional $100,000,000 a month levied on the other occupied countries.

The figures on military expenditures for the United States for 1941 are based on the President's budget message of last week. No German or British figures for 1941 are yet available.

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The Next Four Years

I. *What's Ahead in Fiscal Policy*

This is the first of a series of articles in which the future in America will be discussed by leading experts in various fields.

The second article, "The Future of the Farm," is by Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture. – THE EDITORS

BECAUSE of extraordinary economic conditions, the first two Roosevelt administrations were subject to heavy financial strain. The going looks even tougher ahead—war preparations, perhaps war participation, probably post-war readjustment. There are the pitfalls of 1917 to avoid as well as those of 1933 to 1940.

Borrowing. – It is a well known fact that the New Deal borrowed heavily (much of it from banks) to finance welfare, work relief and farm parity payments. Prospective business stimulation, as well as emergency need, was cited in defense of this program. On the other hand, payroll taxes for social-security reserves were condemned as deflationary. The slogan "Borrow, don't tax" was generally accepted.

Whether or not this policy was appropriate for the first two Roosevelt administrations need not here be debated. At any rate the scene has changed and is changing as the third term is about to begin. We are moving quite rapidly in the direction of full employment. We still have a long way to go, and some would argue that it is too early to contemplate a change in policy. To put the brakes on borrowing, it is said, would be deflationary and it might reverse the upward trend. However, tax institutions have great inertia and cannot be pushed into their highest gear overnight. Taxpayers offer "sales resistance" and administrators require experience. To be sure, full employment and better national income will themselves help to fill the Treasury. The happiest remedy for inadequate revenues is increased production and an expanding tax base. But it may be doubted whether, with our existing taxes, the government can ever catch up on the program of paying money out of the Treasury in order to enlarge income—in order to fill the Treasury. Major attention should be given to modifications of the tax system so as to provide a more adequate yield. The sooner the job is begun, the better.

During the third term there is a fair possibility that we may arrive at that long anticipated economic state which has come to be called "full employment." If and when we do, inflation will cease to be a shibboleth and become a first-rate danger. During the last war, the government continued to borrow from banks amounts in excess of current savings long after full employment. This created no end of inequity and disorder. Rapidly rising prices placed a heavy "tax" on the wage-earner and those with fixed income. An excess-profits tax yielded a handsome revenue, but failed to prevent promiscuous profits and a bumper crop of millionaires. Post-war deflation added its woes to this unhappy experiment.

The Keynes Plan. – John Maynard Keynes of England has presented with great clarity the economic consequences of such a situation. In order to accommodate the war program, the production of consumers' goods is curtailed at the very time full employment spreads new purchasing power. Consumers, unable to satisfy their demands, bid up prices. Rationing is possible but difficult to administer and incapable of adjusting consumers' demand to the stock of available goods. Ordinary taxes and saving, even at war levels, will not divert the required amount of purchasing power into the Treasury. Extraordinary taxes, with very heavy levies on sales or payrolls, might suffice. But Keynes submits a plan which he considers much better than any of these alternatives.

The Keynes Plan, which was explained in detail in The New Republic of July 29, 1940, consists in the main of a combination of direct taxes and "deferred pay," the exemption and guarantee of family allowances, a post-war capital levy and the release of deferred pay at a moment of impending deflation thereafter. Deferred pay and direct taxes would follow the income-tax pattern, and the lower incomes would be allotted the highest proportion of the former. This would mean adequate diversion of purchasing power (also adequate revenue for the government) and would leave the war debt largely in the hands of the poorer classes.

The Keynes Plan has not been adopted in England and Mr. Keynes himself has said that our situation of less than full employment does not warrant its consideration here at present. Moreover, before anything so drastic as the Keynes Plan should be seriously entertained, we ought to take up the slack in our direct-taxation system. England entered the war with a highly developed income tax, carrying a high standard rate, applicable to most income, of 25 percent. The tax burden on our own lower middle class is insignificant in comparison. But we had better keep the Keynes Plan in mind. Some adaptation might well be a way out for us if we do confront a repetition of our 1917 experience.

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Post-War Unemployment.—Getting out of a war is to be dreaded almost as much as getting in. If we may reach full employment in the third term, we may also experience a grave new crisis of unemployment. The problem will be similar in some respects to that of 1933. But a repetition of the fiscal program of the first New Deal administration will meet with greater resistance and general uneasiness. It will be said, with some merit, that persistent budgetary deficits make governments insufficiently critical of their expenditures. It is hoped that in this situation real progress can be made in developing the philosophy and accounting of public investment. Undertakings should be chosen which are so creative (directly or indirectly self-liquidating) that even the banker and the grocer, schooled in Benjamin Franklin economics, will concede the economic justification of the program. These outlays must deal in the essentials of living, that is, shelter, medical care and nutrition. There will be vested interests to overcome. But it is only such a program that can achieve the necessary ends of adequate opportunity, improved standards of living and general confidence.

Taxation.—To the average layman it now appears that we are demanding much more from government than we are willing to pay for and that this state of affairs cannot continue forever. This view of the matter is regarded as reactionary by left-wing monetary economists. But at least it can be conceded that tax institutions do have inertia and that it may be advisable to begin now to prepare for full employment.

Excess-Profits Tax.—The present Congress did enact an excess-profits tax. Two objectives were announced: first, to get more revenue, and second, to prevent war millionaires. The measure will not be very successful on either count. It is estimated to yield only a few hundred million dollars in 1940, and while the estimates for later years are more impressive, a large part of the receipts will come from a boost in the ordinary corporate income tax. A much stronger excess-profits tax during the last war proved a weak antidote for war millionaires.

If we are to rely on the excess-profits tax to fill the Treasury and promote equity during a war emergency, we can and should provide a more effective measure. It has been claimed with plausibility that the present act incorporates all concessions requested by prospective taxpayers during several days of hearings. The act provides alternative bases for the calculation of "excess"; one a comparison between present earnings and those of certain earlier years, the other a reckoning of the ratio of present earnings to capital or investment. These same two bases were used during the last war, but the taxpayer was obliged to use whichever was more favorable to the government. The choice in the present act lies with the taxpayer. Once the excess is determined, it is taxed at graduated rates, not according to the ratio of earnings to capital, but according to the absolute amount of the excess. (Thus the first $20,000 of excess is taxed at 25 percent, the next $30,000 at 30 percent, and so forth). This feature is indefensible on any logic. The complexities of this law are conceded to transcend the comprehension of Congress, including the members on the finance committees.

A better and simpler excess-profits tax, along the lines suggested by Senator La Follette, can be written. As a basis for calculating excess and graduating the rates, principal reliance should be placed upon the ratio of earnings to investment. This is no easy matter, either to write or to administer. But it is the best that can be done with an excess-profits tax. And that instrument is a proper feature of a modern revenue system, at least in a sellers' market, with strong tendencies toward rising prices and extraordinary profits.

But the limitations of any profits tax ought also to be emphasized. In its very best possible application, this is a crude device and erratic in its results. And as a means of preventing "unjust enrichment" it is ineffective. Does anyone suppose that a government that is unable to determine or to insist upon a just price in its contracts can later collect the margin of excess in its tax system? Moreover, the profits tax is a business tax, and no business tax can be relied upon to produce a high degree of equity in the tax system. Business taxes do not differentiate between rich and poor stockholders. For purposes of equity and to prevent war millionaires—we must rely on personal, individual taxation.

Personal Taxation.—And what has been and should be done to our system of personal taxation? It has already been suggested that the income tax should be cultivated both more extensively and intensively, the former by reaching more people, the latter by taking up the slack in the untaxed capacities of the lower and middle-class incomes. It was one of the crying scandals of the first two Roosevelt administrations that in spite of persistent deficits so little was done until 1940 to draw upon the taxable resources of the people with incomes of less than $10,000. A conservative step in this direction was taken in 1940. More and larger steps are now in order. The notion that all of the cost of wars and depressions can be shoved off on the rich is an irresponsible illusion.

Now that the Socal Security Act has inaugurated some collection-at-the-source technique, further attention might be given to new methods of income-tax collection. At the very least, instalment payment with encouragement to budget taxes on a monthly basis (perhaps through the advance purchase of stamps, as in Australia) should be extended.

But strengthening the personal income tax ought not to be entirely at the expense of the little fellow. The latter bears the chief burden of an extensive sys-

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tem of indirect taxes. The large-income recipient has many tax privileges which ought to yield to the present emergency. Tax-exempt interest cannot be equitably fitted into the pattern of a graduated personal tax, and should be eliminated. But by all odds the most important income-tax privilege, and one which must some day be successfully challenged, is that of undistributed corporate income. This enables the rich to avoid entirely the rigors of the personal income tax on much of their income. It means that a considerable part of the national income never goes through the personal-income-tax mill at all.

A very imperfect undistributed-profits tax was inaugurated in 1936, but succumbed to pressure before it could be refined. The corporate institution is not immutable. It should be so modified that what a business invests for the stockholder is treated for tax purposes exactly like what the stockholder invests for himself. That is, the stockholder should be taxed on his pro-rata share of what the corporation earns and does not distribute. If the country really wants to put a stop to war millionaires, this modification, plus a rigorous scale of rates in the personal tax, will do it.

Indirect Taxation.—Direct personal taxes are the most equitable form of taxation. But they require discipline and encounter "sales resistance." If we must have a more adequate revenue system, would it not be better to expand our system of indirect taxation? This means taxing consumption through special or general sales taxes and gross-income taxes.

The federal government has a fairly productive and considerably developed system of so-called luxury taxes, including the well known levies on liquor and tobacco. These taxes are much less equitable than the personal income tax. But unlike a general sales tax, they can be defended on the ground that they leave the individual a respectable alternative and do not deliberately undermine our human resources. These special sales taxes are a tolerable feature of our revenue system and in our present high-pressure era they should be retained. Some defensible possibilities of expansion in this field still remain.

A sales tax on the necessities of life can be defended only as a last resort. Certainly in the United States, governments reach an exceedingly low ebb of ingenuity and morals when they succumb to taxing nutrition, where we already have a great problem of oversupply and under-demand. Such taxes have few advantages except their productivity and political acceptability. It is true that a country which has achieved full employment of men and resources may use a general sales tax to cut consumption and divert purchasing power first to the government and then to a war program. This seems to be the basis of the recent British tax ranging from 12 to 24 percent on purchases. The British accepted this alternative, apparently, as preferable to inflation, strict rationing and price fixing, or the Keynes Plan. They may be right in rejecting the first two alternatives but hardly the third. They have pushed direct taxation to a degree seldom if ever before approximated. There appears to be some ultimate limit to the taxpaying discipline even in Great Britain. However, the new tax will probably mean a sharp and erratic adjustment in prices, a haphazard and regressive distribution of the burden of government, and no protection for a minimum standard of living. The Keynes Plan, with its distribution of burdens on income-tax principles, seems a far better choice. At all events, we in the United States have and will continue to have far less excuse for experimenting with general taxes on the necessities of life than has Britain.

Federal-State Relations.—In an over-all view of the fiscal problem of the federal government we must not forget the necessities of the states or the desirability of better federal-state relations in taxation. In recent years considerable waste and confusion have developed because governments at both state and federal levels chose many of the same sources of revenue. Moreover, the federal government deserves little credit for avoiding general consumption taxes if while so doing the states have been compelled to resort to these very sources. It may be that (at least while unemployment continues) we ought not to plead poverty as an answer to the demands for either education or defense. But federal taxes are already being used as an alibi for cuts in local school budgets. The least that should be done about this situation is to establish some machinery of federal-state relations, with both levels of government represented. It would appear that such a commission could at least work out a technique for the joint administration of mutual taxes. Australia offers a promising example of successful experimentation in this direction. More coördination is a major need of the tax system.

Conscription of Wealth.—We hear considerable discussion these days of "conscription of wealth as well as of men." It is alleged by some that we already have a conscription of wealth in our existing tax system. This is in part true, but does not alter the fact that in times of national peril, when governments commandeer personal services for hazardous employment and little pay, equity requires a very rigorous direct-tax system. Indeed it is certainly true that no tax is equivalent to military service, however high the rate. On the other hand, an attempt to move in the direction of further equality in wartime will be greeted by certain metropolitan newspapers with the argument that production, not equity, is the proper goal of a war program and that these two objectives are incompatible. The captains of industry who are in the saddle and who control production, it is said, cannot be expected to sublimate

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the economic incentives. We cannot expect them to produce (as men fight) either under orders or in devotion to the common good. This raises some issues worth thinking about. Nobody wants to see a complete regimentation of economic life, even in wartime. Neither does anybody like to see the life-sustaining means of defense available only on terms acceptable to a few strategically situated people. In this situation democracy might try to develop a program of direct production, at least as an instrument of bargaining power.

It has been well observed that if rational and democratic government in the United States is to give way to some totalitarian regime, the refusal of the American people to tax themselves adequately and intelligently will probably be an important cause of the tragedy. During the next four years much should be done to preclude such outcome from such cause.

HAROLD M. GROVES

Prologue to Peace

AT THE OUTBREAK of the war there was a tremendous interest in the United States concerning what kind of peace ought to succeed it. The assumption was that the Allies could win and would decide what the peace would be. The only American reluctance to exert influence on the outcome was based on the natural belief that history would repeat itself.

Twenty years before we had expressed idealistic peace aims, with bitter results. Apparent acceptance of these aims by one set of belligerents had helped to determine our partisanship and had been the formal cause of our entry into the War. Some of the aims which were embodied in the peace—like self-determination of small nationalities—subsequently bedeviled Europe. Some, which were betrayed in the treaty or afterward—like universal disarmament and absence of indemnities—had made a mockery of our sacrifice. It was powerfully argued that we ought to learn by experience. We had neither the wisdom to reorganize Europe nor the power to enforce our decisions. If we projected yet another idealistic dream of peace, it might, first, lead us into war, and second, again mask European realities and lead to disappointment and disaster. Our only real contribution could come from being disillusioned and hard-boiled.

But history did not repeat itself, at least not with any routine consistency. The Allies promptly began to lose the War. The imminent question became, not what sort of peace they would impose, but what sort Hitler would impose on them. We could not remain indifferent to that, because it not only would be infinitely worse than any possible peace dictated by the other side, but would certainly be injurious to ourselves. Much as we hesitated to be for anything, we knew well what we were against. It is on this ground that the whole economic power of this nation is now being mobilized behind Britain. As long as it is a question of avoiding her defeat by Nazism, we are willing to help Tory Britain, liberal Britain or social revolutionary Britain. Assuming at the very worst that this is a war of rival imperialisms, still we shall be hard-boiled if we recognize and assist that kind of imperialism which is the less dangerous to us.

But suppose we enable Britain to stem the assault. She will certainly not wish to make a stalemate peace. She will, as far as now can be predicted, want to go on and win a crushing victory. At the moment when, in large strategic terms, she passes from the defensive to the offensive, we shall again be confronted with the original question of the nature of future peace. What kind of peace will she strive to impose, and shall we help her to impose it? At that time we cannot avoid answering the question, whether by implication or by explicit declaration. We shall not have, as at the beginning, any choice of remaining aloof.

The arms on which Britain will be depending for victory will be coming only from us. We not only shall manufacture them; we shall "lend" them to her. If we decide to stop lending them, Britain must make peace with the Axis. If we decide not to stop lending them, she will go on fighting to express her will. We, therefore, not only can but must decide how we want the war to end. Britain must assent to our terms if we make them; if we do not make any, we become either her accomplice or Hitler's. Indeed, we may by that time be even more directly involved, if Hitler has decided to treat us as a belligerent. Then we shall have to know what our own peace aims are.

The only way to prepare for that moment is to think about it now. This article does not pretend be even a summary of a first draft of the peace. But it does aim to suggest some of the considerations which ought to be borne in mind in attacking the problem—considerations that already have been thought about in some systematic way.

1. As has many times been said, this is not only a war but a revolution. Hitler's so-called "revolution" is the chief item of his propaganda. Victory over him cannot be merely a check to his revolution, a return to pre-war civilization. The nations fighting him must transform themselves in order to win it. The populations conquered by him must rise against their rulers if he is to be deposed. This includes the German population. Revolutions are not scheduled in army headquarters, nor are their terms precisely drafted in

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foreign offices. They are primitive upsurges, largely uncontrollable, though not wholly unpredictable. Any peace aims must be drawn up with the idea that they will be effectuated only as revolutionary peoples accept them.

2. The essence of a stable peace will consist in something else than the drawing or redrawing of national boundaries. Boundaries have significance only in respect to the kind of authority exercised within them. A peace concerned mainly with boundaries would be an expression of the conflict of national powers—in other words, an imperialistic and nationalistic peace. A genuinely revolutionary peace, in present-day terms, must be concerned chiefly with the kind of society existing within all nations involved, and with the super-national society. The storm center is a civil war of Europe which can be really ended only by unity, and the important considerations concern the terms of that unity.

3. The chief inadequacy of the peace slogans of 1917-19 was that they were negative and backward-looking, rather than positive and projected into the future. *No* annexations, *no* indemnities, *no* more aggression, *no* armament, *no* trade barriers—these led to the unfortunate attempt to freeze the *status quo* under the idealistic front of the League of Nations. Europe burst terribly from that bond. Life is energy; it will not hold still; if denied growth it will murder or commit suicide. We shall make the same mistake now if we conceive the peace merely as no more Hitlerism, no more aggression.

4. It goes almost without saying that the solution is more than a question of political forms. Politics is dry bones without its flesh of economics; the economic body is like a dissecting-room cadaver without its social skin, its nervous system of purpose, emotion, moral organization. The peace that will evoke loyalty is one that will give scope to the whole of man. It must mean something to the individual to which he can pin his faith; it must also mean to him something tangible and and sustaining. It must constitute both emotional security and bread and butter.

5. Any useful contribution to be made by the United States must be within the scope, not of idealistic fancies, but of its own interest and its own power. Both "interest" and "power" need careful and realistic definition. Our interest does not mean just the interest of exporters, importers or foreign investors, and not at all that vague abstraction, imperial destiny. Our power does not mean all that we can temporarily dictate by force of arms, or by force of the manufacture of arms. What kind of civilization do we intend to create in this country, and what does it need from the world? That is the scope of our interest. What can we contribute in the long run to the kind of world that would offer the most freedom to our purposes? That is the scope of our power.

These concepts need to be broken down into a prediction of the needs and powers of a democratic society in the United States, efficiently producing and distributing its wealth, fostering a great culture, making full use of science and other resources of the mind. Already a few fairly specific ideas have been arrived at as to the necessity of civil, academic and scientific liberty, the requirements for import and export of raw materials, and the immediately post-war destiny of this country as an exporter of capital goods to industrialize undeveloped but potentially rich regions and to help rebuild ruined areas and rehabilitate impoverished populations. More definition of this sort is desirable.

The general outlines of a peace based on these considerations begin to be visible, just as they have begun to be visible to some Englishmen and others capable of seeing and molding the future. These outlines still are shadowy, but they are real enough so that by their guidance we may instantly detect forces that are moving in the wrong direction and so must be discouraged. The peace must involve, in one form or another:

European unity, on a democratic basis. The terms and form of this unity must be decided by European peoples themselves.

World collaboration to control trade and investment, which should not be left "free" for the exploitation of capitalist or nationalist imperialism, but mutually planned by democratic nations in the interest of a rising standard of living throughout the world.

Planned increase of the productive resources of the world through industrial advance, not merely in the developed countries but in the more backward regions.

International guarantees of the essential liberties of mind and body.

The creation and support of international cultural institutions. Approaches (in a literal and legal sense) to world citizenship.

The guarantee, in every country, of jobs and social security.

Putting content into such outlines is an essential part of the defense program. By industrial and military preparedness alone we might prevent Hitler from winning the war, but without preparedness for peace we shall surely lose the war ourselves.

GEORGE SOULE

Triolet Académique

"On the one hand" is quickly amended—
We must wait for the verdict of time.
No matter how warmly commended,
"On the one hand" is quickly amended.
As we keep our judgment suspended,
"On the other" reëchoes its chime.
"On the one hand" is quickly amended—
We must wait for the verdict of time.

SAMUEL YELLEN

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The Two Knudsens

According to all authorities, Mr. William S. Knudsen is a great production man, or, in an older phrase, factory manager. He has the ability to translate a bundle of blueprints into acres of stamping and milling machines, lathes, ponderously moving assembly belts, from which emerge precise, infinitely complicated instruments of war and peace. Among other distinctions, he has supervised the building of more automobiles in a year than any other person.

This much about Mr. Knudsen—his technical skill—is unanimously agreed on. But beyond it, in Washington, there are two sharply conflicting hypotheses. One is expressed in the simple-guy legend. Mr. Knudsen, at heart, is still a mechanic. Unaware of politics, social forces, personal ambition, he just likes to make things. Supporters of this theory point to his blueprint-littered desk, to the great, glittering airplane engine he had set up in his office, to his abstracted habit of asking callers whether they could make tanks, to his frequent monologues on the possibility of welding bombing airplanes, to his invariable reference to himself as the "hired hand" and to President Roosevelt as the "boss."

The dissenters from this theory picture Mr. Knudsen as a manipulator, a power-grabber, one of the most skillful Washington has seen. They profess to believe that Mr. Knudsen obtained his present place as head of the defense organization by something like a plot. Just as Mr. Roosevelt was about to land from his vacation cruise aboard the Tuscaloosa, Mr. Knudsen made his "terrible-urgency" speech before the National Manufacturers' Association—a theme simultaneously repeated by Mr. Stimson and his assistant at the War Department, Mr. Patterson. They "jumped" Mr. Roosevelt. He was forced, willy-nilly, to act.

The dissenters point out that Mr. Knudsen came to Washington from the presidency of General Motors. You don't become head of one of the largest, richest industrial enterprises in the world by sitting amidst heaps of blueprints and fingering pieces of welded metal. When Mr. Knudsen came to Washington last June he told associates that he didn't want to be defense chairman, that he merely wanted to unravel the hideously complicated technical problems involved in arms making. His disclaimers were the start of the simple-guy legend; they were also the start of successive booms for Messrs. Leon Henderson and Donald Nelson. How genuine were these disclaimers, the anti-Knudsenites now ask.

In honesty, neither of these theories is conclusive. From everything that Mr. Knudsen has done since he has been in Washington, you cannot prove that he is simple, or that he is wily. The reason that his personality is baffling, that onlookers don't know what to make of him, is his manners, which are both European—he was, of course, born in Denmark—and of a previous generation. In a sense, Mr. Knudsen is a stupendous vindication of Mrs. Emily Post. His habit of addressing strangers as sir or madam, of bowing slightly from the waist, of making cheerful and pleasant comments—particularly cheerful and pleasant comments about Mr. Roosevelt during Mr. Wendell Willkie's campaign—have served him as a suit of armor in one of the most difficult posts a man ever held.

Chiefly his manners have given him complete freedom. Other men in the defense organization, to prove themselves good fellows, or for whatever reason, have confided their inmost hopes, prejudices, ambitions—which, a few hours later, have been Washington's common property. Mr. Knudsen's personality is a mystery, principally because he seems to have no intimates—save for the lately arrived Mr. K. P. Keller of Chrysler. His chief excursion outside the defense offices has been at a since-celebrated administration poker game, where, betting a dollar, he was reproved by Secretary of Commerce Jones for hazarding his whole year's salary. Disliking the lack of privacy of a hotel, he has rented a house in Washington, where he lives alone with a man servant. Every other weekend, an army bomber takes him back home to Detroit. At the Defense Commission's offices, Mr. Knudsen's age is unknown. It does not appear in the usual reference books, and, because of his slight formality of manner, no one has presumed to ask him what it is. (He came to America around 1900 and looks to be about sixty.)

Most Americans, no doubt, are less concerned with the intricacies of Mr. Knudsen's personality than with his ability to drive through the arms program in time to save Britain and our own country. The period of blueprints is about over; the program in defense is to force coöperation from the heads of industry. From all testimony, Mr. Knudsen is no cracker-downer. His associates say that he is extraordinarily patient, that

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his inclination is to accept the word of a manufacturer with grave politeness. But when it is clearly apparent that he is being deceived, his associates add, he can speak with terrible force. His vast bulk, his huge fists, the salty machine-shop talk that curiously interlards his formality, make this seem plausible. His associates say that he is entirely aware that by being tough, by blowing an airplane-company management—let us say—out of the water, he could create popular fame for himself in Washington, but that he prefers his own method.

Next to coercing manufacturers, Mr. Knudsen's chief task, in coöperation with his co-chairman, Mr. Hillman, will be dealing with organized labor. He was president of General Motors during the 1937 sitdown strike; United Auto Workers leaders who treated with him then describe him as a trifle formal, cheerful and pleasant. As the sitdown strikers' demands were presented, he is described as frequently turning to the General Motors lawyers and asking, in surprised innocence, "Why can't we grant that?" Was he simple, or was he wily? Defense associates say that only once has he shown hostility to unions, when a jurisdictional strike involving four truck drivers at a Chrysler tank armory held up five thousand production workers.

According to the pro-Knudsenites in Washington, Mr. Knudsen shows simple, charming awe for the circumstances that have called him, a poor Danish immigrant boy who worked with his hands, to lead America in its great peril. The other side says that he hasn't worked with his hands for some twenty-five years, that he is a great corporation head. The pro-Knudsenites tell of the uncomplex user of infinitely complicated tools. The other side says that his appointment has rolled a stone against the door of the New Deal's tomb. Mr. Knudsen himself smiles gravely, pleasantly, with a touch of formality.

JONATHAN MITCHELL

Streamlining the Circus

THE NEWS that I had been retained by the North boys to redesign the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus brought across my desk as many editorials as would ordinarily come out of a political campaign. Up until that time I had not realized that this honest intent could be so laden with dire possibilities—in short it had never occurred to me that redesigning the circus could be, as the political writers say, "significant." But from San Jose, California, to Boston, Massachusetts, the editorial plaints keep coming in. Next, I'll expect Dr. Gallup to take a poll to see just how the electorate feels about it. If the emotions of the populace are reflected by the editorials, there really is something warming, if not "significant" in this concern about such a matter when the sick world is falling apart. Maybe it's a healthy sign.

Those who have written the editorials no doubt share with the writer a nostalgic memory. A memory of arising at dawn, slipping out of the house and going down to the pasture where the village street changed into the country road, to meet the circus coming into town. They too have watered the elephants or distributed bills from the advance car for passes to the greatest show on earth. In one way or another they have wished themselves a part of this magic caravan, whether as clown or only husband of the spangled bareback rider. It's a little late for some of us to realize on those youthful dreams; fortunately I am now privileged to sublimate some of them.

There honestly should be no cause for alarm that the circus is to be redesigned, or "streamlined," to use the abused word employed by the newspapers. No iconoclastic feet will tread down the sacred idol of this or the passing generation. The job, in its essentials, is a necessary one and should not be deplored any more than adding fire-escapes and exits to some beloved theatre. If the circus is to keep alive as a unique form of entertainment it must be capable of operating successfully in a highly competitive field.

The circus as it now operates is an assortment of equipment and methods, the residue of many combinations and amalgamations. This lack of unity not only affords a designer's holiday but also gives scope for the engineer's talents. The practical here is as important as the visual. In the days when there was little or no automobile traffic, and the circus gave a parade before the afternoon performance, many draught horses were used. These beautiful Percherons and Clydesdales have had to be retired for a motorized means of getting the wagons off and onto the trains and to the show lot. A year ago John Ringling sold 460 draught horses, which freed one-quarter that number of men, and replaced them with six tractors and six men. But the circus has just nibbled at the motor age in its gradual transition. We expect to adapt every possible mechanical means suitable to move the circus easier and faster.

To a country accustomed to modern zoos, the old circus wagon of the menagerie is obsolete. The circus every year has to renew a portion of its cages. The "Twenty-fourth Street wagons," so-called because the equipment was made on Twenty-fourth Street, were usually duplicated in their baroque grandeur as they wore out. The Ringlings maintain a special plant at Sarasota, Florida, for this work. It may have been nicely sentimental to carry on this wagon tradition, but it was not particularly efficient. A new type of wagon, lighter, stronger and easier to transport, will replace the old one, until finally all the cages are uniform.

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This new wagon will aid us in creating a certain atmosphere we wish to establish—a menagerie that will not be a mere succession of cages end to end, but a simulated jungle through which the visitors may wander in safety and, we hope, astonishment. To recount too many details would spoil the surprise.

Our engineers and designers accompanied me this winter when we toured with the circus for several days. One of the possibilities uncovered was the use of plastics in cages instead of bars. This could be done easily in all places where there is no extra safety hazard, with the non-ferocious beasts. Then there is Gargantua, who has taken on the added responsibility of a bride. Suitable, air-conditioned honeymoon quarters must be provided for this happy reminder of man's humble origin.

As the old wagons were the legacy of a more flamboyant era, so were the posters and signs. Something will be done with an idea of unifying this essential part of a circus. We do not intend to lose the flavor of circus posters, but we do feel that they could be as dramatic as they now are and less corny. The side-show legends and banners, too, are a bit dated for a people that have had the modern impact of two world's fairs.

The redesign of the main tent will be the major single project. But as tents have to be made a year in advance, the modern tent will not be ready as soon as some of the other features. Changing conditions compel consideration for a type of tent different from the traditional affair of myriad poles and guy ropes. There are not as many accessible empty lots on the edges of towns as formerly. The circus occupies eleven acres. The problem of transporting, feeding and sleeping the army of roustabouts and canvas men necessary to erect the tent in the required brief time is serious. A more compact tent, shaped to utilize all space and capable of being erected and taken down by modern mechanical means, is a necessity. The new tent will employ no interior poles, so vision will be greatly improved. It will permit better air-conditioning. It will also be modeled for sight lines and for the best arrangements of seats, focusing attention on a more compact area devoted to the entertainment. This will also permit a better use of lights, employing the technique followed in large stage productions, focusing on this or that thrilling feature of the main entertainment.

We also plan to have some movable stages, these at various spots in the show, supplanting or augmenting the circus rings. The advantage of these stages will be that the performances, whether animal or other acts, will be thrown into relief against the rest of the show. The rings will always be rings. By the use of plastics and concealed lighting, we hope to make more dramatic the events that take place there.

The circus band will receive more attention and more honor than it has heretofore. There will be new bandstands, with special sounding boards, and advantage will be taken of the new consciousness of all forms of music. Aerial acts will still be "thrilling, death-defying" and as hazardous as ever, but they will take place amid fewer trappings and gear than heretofore.

These are the main categories along which the streamlining or modernization will work. There are thousands of details that are a functional part of these major operations, but many of them do not concern the visual part of the circus. Some of these pertain to management, many of them have to do with those innumerable activities that take place before dawn and which the public, aside from the small boys, is never aware of. Some are prosaic things, such as diesel power plants, electric cooking ranges and tractors for loading. This last item will be good news to the elephants, which have done their share of the heavy push and pull since time and the circus began. Then there will be thousands of new costumes for the performers, new gags for the clowns, new uniforms for the attendants.

In all these changes there will be preserved that essential thing that is the circus, call it flavor, call it atmosphere or magic. I am sure that everything we do to it will be done with this vital thought uppermost—nothing that is the circus will be destroyed. If anyone has doubts about that, he should sit in some time when we are having planning talks with John Ringling North or his brother Henry Ringling North. Some days these meetings run on for hours. One of us makes a suggestion, something we consider brilliant. "You can't do that," says Mr. North, "they wouldn't stand for it."

So you see, the circus is in good hands, the hands of those who have carried water for the elephants and love its tradition as much as editorial writers and general viewers-with-alarm. NORMAN BEL GEDDES

Provence

It is a decade now since he and she
Spent September in Provence: the vineyard
Was close about the house; mosquitoes and cicadas
Garrulous day and night; and by the sea
Thighs and shoulders tanning themselves and one
Gay old man in particular who never
Missed a day, a glutton for the sun,
But did not bathe. He and she with swimming
Every noon were wild for food; a Basque
Woman cooked on charcoal—aubergine with garlic,
And there were long green grapes exploding
on the palate
And smelling of eau de Cologne. They had
nothing to ask
Except that it should go on. Watching the vintage—
A file of bullock carts and the muzzle of each
Animal munching purple—he suddenly said
"We must get married soon." Down on the beach,
His wife and three of his three children dead,
An old man lay in the sun, perfectly happy.

LOUIS MACNEICE

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Toward a Popular Foreign Policy

THAT PEOPLES ARE, by and large, "better" than their governments, and in advance of their governments, is one of the stand-bys of liberal thought. Is it possible, at this moment, to draw a line between what the people of the United States want, and what their government is requesting in their name on the world stage? If we can draw that line, then we shall find the fundamentals of a popular program for the period of total defense. In what way does the "voice of the people of America," as funneled through the person of, say, Mr. Sumner Welles in Washington, or Ambassador Grew in Japan, or Ambassador Weddell in Spain, differ from the voice of the people as the people themselves would give utterance to it if they possessed clearer methods of articulation?

Concrete instances alone will throw light on this problem. There is Japan. Our official policy toward Japan is to allow large shipments of American oil (20,000,000 barrels per year, plus) to Japan's military machine, while banning all Japanese immigration to America. That is the "policy of the United States." The "United States" ships oil; the "United States" insults the Japanese people by needlessly banning all Japanese immigration. This shorthand phraseology does the people of the United States some injustice. Only a few individuals ship oil to Japan; only a few are at all concerned by the fact that if we should put Japan on the same immigration basis as other countries, removing the insult, perhaps one hundred Japanese per year would enter. In the one case a few oil companies, in the other a few hothead West Coast publishers, have managed to put the great seal of the republic on their own practices and prejudices. One could stow the persons who are really vitally interested in the two policies into a single moderate-sized elevator. Yet they are, in these spheres, the "United States"; a big name for two small groups.

A really popular American foreign policy might call for banning all oil shipments to Japan and removing the stupid anti-Japanese immigration bar, taking both steps on the same day. This would be a token that the American people had made an approach to the Chinese people, and, also, that they had made an approach to the Japanese people, clearly revealing a measure of good will to both. The only personages who would be more infuriated than American oil dealers and American racial theorists would be Japanese militarists, who need our spiteful immigration law in their business; they use it to show that "the United States" is hostile to the Japanese people; that the West hates them; that their future lies in conquest. It turns out that because an encysted racial theory and the oil business dominate our expressed policy, we help to motivate and then to fuel the very conquest we hate. Somewhere along the line the will of the people has stabbed itself into bluntness against a stone wall; a tragedy in a day when peoples must call clearly unto peoples if those revolutions which alone can save the total countries are to be ignited.

Mr. Ernest Bevin's most profound remark since his entry into the English government has been his comment that the working people need representation among the makers of foreign policy as much as they do among the makers of home policy. Sir Samuel Hoare, representing the "British people" in Madrid, follows, for a time, a policy of aid to Franco. He is the moving spirit in arranging a ghostly deal for a $100,000,000 American loan to Spain; that transaction which will not die no matter how many times Mr. Hull kills it in press conference. Suddenly Sir Samuel cools off. This change in his viewpoint takes place because English business men in Tangier (recently seized by Spain) are deprived of certain rights. Is their plight, however sad, the best basis for the foreign policies of the "British people" or of the "American people"? Is this that clear call across the seas of a people fighting for democracy to a people who have lost it? What do the American people want their government to ask of Spain? Those who think about it at all want a cessation of the executions of Republicans, free passage for refugees, and a stopping of the loud Falangist mouth, now demanding Spanish recovery of the lost Latin American empire. These are minimum requirements. Later we may want more. Yet a shipload of food goes to Ramón Serrano Suñer's Spain with no pro-democratic strings attached. Is it the policy of the "United States" to save the Monroe Doctrine and also to help its enemies? That can be the policy of only a relatively small group within the United States, which, on the food-to-Europe issue, is operating on one of the lower levels of humanitarianism; almost in the basement of the structure of human kindness.

It is by practice shots, as it were, at these relatively smaller problems of foreign policy that we may perhaps develop enough clarity to work on the larger matters, for example, the best use of our leverage against England to obtain the kind of English foreign policy that will make the best world use of our aid. The American people do not like Britain's Indian policy. They would not produce a .22 rifle to protect that. The American people have little confidence in the ultra-Conservative Captain Margesson, new War Secretary, who will command the weapons to be made here. Why not say these things? In this field tact works against the democracies.

SAMUEL GRAFTON

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Washington Notes

Old Doc Leon

A FEW DAYS AGO, a curious little meeting took place here. Convened without ceremony, it can be regarded as our formal entrance into a war economy. Its participants were SEC Commissioner—and commissioner of the old NDAC—Leon Henderson, together with spokesmen for the scrap-iron and steel trade association. It was the administration's first crack-down, its first attempt to make business act from patriotism rather than profits. When the scrap men walked into the conference, the Pittsburgh price of scrap was $24 a ton; when they walked out it was $22 a ton. It cannot be said that this was a complete triumph for Mr. Henderson; he had asked $20. But it was a start toward government-directed wartime economic planning.

What the talk at the meeting revealed—and what Mr. Henderson's statisticians had known beforehand—was that the supposed acute shortage in scrap did not exist. Supplies were short primarily because dealers were holding stocks off the market in the hope of higher prices, and remembering that in 1918 scrap went to $50. It was similar grabbing by business men that beat France, and the administration does not mean to tolerate it here.

But the astonishing aspect of the meeting was the good grace—at least on the surface—with which the scrap men took Mr. Henderson's knuckle-rapping. It is doubtful if anyone else in Washington could have wielded the birch with his deftness. Unlike the dollar-a-year men that overrun the defense organization, he is a New Dealer, an outsider. He cannot be suspected of favoring former business associates. He is also a practising economist, with a rather haughty pride in knowing more about every business man's business than the latter does himself. At the scrap meeting, he discussed the tearing up of unused railroad tracks, the wrecking of building skeletons, together with scrap's many other sources. He offered a broad, well padded shoulder for en entire industry to weep on. He made a price-fixing ultimatum sound like a family doctor's advice to give up cigars and an extra highball after dinner. But, just as you don't play jokes on your doctor, it is predicted here that scrap will go down and stay there.

Plain-spoken Representative Vinson, chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, announced with the opening of Congress that he meant to find out what ailed our defense program. With the first session of his committee, he dredged up remarkable evidence. His witness was Admiral John H. Towers, a lean, weather-tanned, gay seadog, now the navy's aviation chief. Admiral Towers firmly announced that he didn't expect to complete his modest plane-buying program for another eighteen months. Under questioning, it was brought out that the navy was aiming at only a thousand long-range patrol bombers, instead of the two thousand that, a few months ago, were estimated to be our minimum hemispherical requirements.

Members of Mr. Vinson's committee seemed not fully to trust their hearing. Timidly Admiral Towers was asked if he had considered the possibility of this country's being involved in war; mightn't eighteen months be too long to wait for our naval air force? Wasn't there some way to rush the navy's air program? Admiral Towers said crisply that the government was receiving splendid coöperation from our patriotic airplane manufacturers. The only thing that disturbed him was the possibility of labor trouble. As in previous years, the navy would propose to Congress the lifting of Walsh-Healey restrictions—safeguarding wages and working conditions—from certain types of contracts.

Young, blond Representative Magnusen of Washington, tested New Dealer, challenged Admiral Towers. We had a great automobile industry, he said; what if no passenger cars were made next season, and the vast technical resources of Detroit were devoted to airplane building? Could not our air defense be hurried? "Not appreciably," said the Admiral, with a frigid eye. This was too much for even Chairman Vinson, who, for years the navy's first friend, burst out in expostulations. Ever since the defense effort began last June, experienced observers have said that dead areas in industry were matched by dead areas within the fighting services. The forthcoming congressional hearings on the War and Navy Departments will bear watching.

A minor motive of Mr. Roosevelt in seeking to aid England through a modification of last session's Pittman act is understood to be his desire to outflank Secretary of Commerce—and Credit Administrator—Jesse Jones, the New Deal's octopus. Under an early plan, British aid was to be given through a government-sponsored corporation, which would have authority to purchase munitions and arrange for their lease or rental—in any case, their transfer—to London. It was immediately discovered that Mr. Jones thought such a corporation would fit nicely beside the RFC, and that he already considered it his property. Later he was discovered in quiet conferences with congressional leaders; according to unconfirmed report, Congress was well on its way to demanding Jones as defense Pooh-Bah.

Some weeks ago, after continuous, sweaty work, Mr. Donald Nelson of the defense organization mobilized the Federal Reserve System and all its member banks to make loans to small companies engaged on defense orders. His purpose was to make possible the highest degree of subcontracting, to enable any concern, no matter how obscure, to take part in arms manufacturing. The banking system was not merely to make loans; it was to act as a communication channel between Washington and the country. It was to ferret out factories with idle machine-tool capacity, encourage them to apply for business, see to it that their offers were promptly acted on by government agencies. Just as Mr. Nelson's program was to be announced, Mr. Jones called in reporters and proclaimed that the RFC would make all needed defense loans, and would make certain loans at 1.5 percent. Later Mr. Jones made clear that the 1.5-percent rate applied only to government-guaranteed contracts, not to loans to subcontractors. But in the meantime the country's banks had screamed that they had been double-crossed. It can be argued that the RFC is a socially more desirable instrument for defense financing than the banking system; nevertheless, the administration now regards Mr. Jones warily.

Washington T. R. B.

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Three Flights

My Sister Eileen, by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov, Based on the Stories by Ruth McKenney. Biltmore Theatre, December 26, 1940.
Eight O'Clock Tuesday, by Robert Wallsten and Mignon G. Eberhart. Henry Miller's Theatre, January 7, 1941.
Flight to the West, by Elmer Rice. Guild Theatre, January 6, 1941.

THESE STORIES of Miss McKenney's, forwarded on from The New Yorker to Broadway, remain lovable and lively; in their stage form they still present a facet of the American scene. Under Mr. George Kaufman's direction, the occasion provides laughter, roars, giggles, oncoming motifs and Greenwich Village comicalities to a degree that constitutes a farce ultimately. We must say farce, because of the fact that comedy requires more time for thought, a wider interval of time for gestation of the material—we must remember that, by definition, comedy is "for those who think." That is not necessarily against the play, however. The rush of incident and the helpless ups and downs in "My Sister Eileen" create a mood that is pleasantly wild, free of realistic measure, almost poetic. One of the sisters—Ruth—is well played by Shirley Booth; Sister Eileen and, even more so, the student from Georgia Tech, could be better cast.

The mystery play of "Eight O'Clock Tuesday" on the other hand, is cast with an unusual amount of capability and good taste on the part of the company. The story turns round the murder of Ivan Godden (Mr. McKay Morris), and leans back and forth into the evidence and then into the original incident, or at least the story as told by this or that character in the course of it. The play could not really be described as any too exciting—the excitement might be forwarded, perhaps, by some greater commotion or intensity at the very beginning.

As for Miss Pauline Lord, the only regret to be felt with regard to her participation in the play is that the role she essays has not a fuller connection with the story—which is merely another way of saying that it is too bad not to have more—and more and more—of Miss Lord. In her very first speeches she manages to electrify the moment, what with that marvelous pausing she can employ, that intensity and compression, that dazzling, muted stage projection. So far as I know, she commands the finest and most compelling realism—in a sense that is at the same time both physically exact and almost mystical—to be found in all our English-speaking theatre. That there is no play ready and waiting for her genius is a darkly significant—if not shameful—reflection on the state of things.

The heroic role and palms of Mr. Elmer Rice's "Flight to the West" must be assigned, I should think, to the clipper herself and to her stage designer, Mr. Jo Mielziner, who has provided this expensive assimilation of feltings, stuffings, cloths and metals that so well reproduce the transatlantic planes. Surely nobody could blame Mr. Mielziner for the scene's not taking on any mood, or moods, or reproach him for that mediocre authorization of mechanics, mediocrity and the obvious that has been fabricated. It is not his fault that there is no one tone, dramatic mood or dramatic necessity, in the play to go by

The story interest of this voyage westward on the Pan-American Airways transatlantic clipper turns partly on the loves, or married life, of the young couple—he is a Jew, she a Gentile—recently married, returning to America because of the war. She is to have a baby and wants to wait till they are settled to tell him. Among the other passengers is a German spy; a member of the Washington staff of the German Embassy; a woman from Louvain, her blinded husband, little daughter and baby; a young woman journalist, with her eye out for spies; a retired colonel from the American army; Frau Clara Rosenthal, a Jewish woman escaping from Nazi tyranny to another life; and various lesser characters. The journalist smokes out the spy and tells the clipper's captain, who finds an excuse for landing at Bermuda. As they approach New York, the Louvain woman, half-crazed with grief and hatred, tries to shoot the German attaché, who is saved by the intervention of the young Jewish husband, who is then stretched out at the point of death, but is told of the baby by his wife and is evidently going to live—which concludes the story of the play—the story *per se*.

The content of the play is full of serious intention; the subject matter is highly applicable to the time. Many things discussed during the year of 1940 are here discussed or turned into motifs of character and plot. The international rich and the abysmally poor refugees are alike omitted from the scene. Otherwise the people of this play are in fact as varied and as timely as the clipper itself, the means of their locomotion. The great defect of Mr. Rice's play is that it lacks creative imagination and invention. If the play had anything original or propulsive in this respect, it might supersede even the fault that is almost constantly present: the element of the explicit, that saying everything to the finish without expressing it, that tedious fullness, banality, those verbal or mental clichés, prose smotheration.

To write a drama of significance and of genuine importance and thrust about the war going on in the world, with all the peoples and issues involved and all the future predicted, is an achievement still awaited in our American theatre. How that drama will be written I should not of course pretend to say or presume to formulate. It will arrive from the same fundamental bases that significant drama has always derived from and will always derive from. These are words of course and might remain mere words. The problem may be indicated somewhat nevertheless. The whole matter has to be reduced and refined down to something that is universal, if you like, but that in some primary aspect applies deeply and exclusively to this present moment that the play assumes to deal with. This in turn must be given to us in a matrix, as it were, of created human beings and in genuine created images of life and behavior.

Otherwise the play, for all its serious ambition, may remain only a mere attack on all war (which would be quite another matter). Or it may be merely a list of human stories and human sufferers (a list that, however marked the differences may seem to be, is yet more or less the same for every war in every place). Or such a handling of the play may end merely, or largely, with the implication that the enemy, in this case the Nazis, differ generically from all instances hitherto, in brutality and a frank policy of ruthlessness. In degree, yes. But in kind, no. General Sheridan, of the Union army in the Civil War, said to Bismarck

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during the war between Germany and France that the "proper strategy consisted in inflicting as telling blows as possible upon the enemy's army, and then in causing the inhabitants so much suffering that they must long for peace, and force their government to demand it. The people must be left with nothing but their eyes to weep with over the war." During the World War the Bishop of London, in an address, quoted Sheridan's remark under the impression that he was quoting the Kaiser.

As Frau Rosenthal, the Jewish refugee, Miss Eleonora Mendelssohn gave a performance highly distinguished and beautiful in every respect. STARK YOUNG

Odd Ends

IN THE MOVIE VERSION, "Kitty Foyle" is no longer a study of the white-collar girl. Kitty is poor-Irish and has to work for a living, but she would have had about the same important troubles of the heart if she had been anybody or anywhere else with the same heart design. It is now simply a love story, with social complications, inner debates, good times and bad—and an effective enough working-girl background. It is done with such earnestness as to be slow and talky at times, but since the girl in love is Ginger Rogers, the picture has its truth and beauty too.

As the story goes, Kitty has a romance with a young Philadelphia heirloom, finally marries him but finds the family vault too much to take and goes back to her job in New York, where she has her baby alone. There has been an interne hanging around and there comes eventually the news of the young heir's remarriage (the Hays office isn't so scared of a divorce as it is of there not being any legal need for one). And as all this has been told in flashback, a sort of debate between Kitty and her conscience, we come in the end back to the question we started on, which of two candidates is she going to leave with this midnight? The ex-interne is one; the heir is the other—he has broken away from his second wife without a divorce but for good. I am sure the girl is more in suspense over the heads and tails of it than you will be, for the two men have been written into the story rather carelessly, and life with either of them looks like much less fun than just being Ginger Rogers.

The film, as written by Dalton Trumbo and Donald Ogden Stewart and directed by Sam Wood, runs some fifteen minutes too long and still manages some of its turns too abruptly. But it is good fun when it is on the lighter side and dexterous in handling the difficulties of the inner voice and the flashback technique. It will be remembered most warmly as appropriate setting for Miss Rogers and the many shades of a character she can make come to life. I've said it too many times, I'm afraid, but it's still true that this girl from the dancing pictures has learned a great deal and divines a great deal more, and still stays just as bright and as sweet as she is, and very high among the screen's first young ladies.

As the movie awards are given this way and that at this end of the year, most of the good pictures get at least some attention. But some interesting things come of it too. Where children had a vote, "Knute Rockne, All American" won out over every picture made especially for kiddies. As a movie, this had some football, but not enough, and a whitewash of saintliness. The best thing it had was a fine, sturdy performance by Pat O'Brien that made you happy for him. Anyway, the lesson is plain: there are still heroes on the earth for children to know about and dream of being, and candy boxes about such a little *darling* as the Thief of Bagdad are most probably made for your old lady (my hero was Christy Mathewson, and to me the name Bagdad is still somehow associated with my father's working pants).

One thing that happened in 1940 was Preston Sturges, who made "The Great McGinty" (released last summer) and "Christmas in July," which is still in the second-run houses. I should have mentioned "Christmas in July" sooner. It is fairly light-weight but it is more fun than many of the year's prouder efforts in comedy; and it is the work of a director who makes hard things seem like doing it the easy way, rather than vice versa. He apparently did most of it himself, taking the idea of a twenty-a-week chump who can't lose his faith in $25,000 radio contests—he is hoaxed by office merry andrews into believing he has made first prize at last—and working that out with complications and coincidences into a little over an hour of comedy. There's a girl of course; there are neighbors and office workers, managers and employers. There are dejection, elation, heartbreak and happy ending, in that order. The heartbreak part of it is overdone: too much talk, too easy a reliance on those pitfalls of comedy (1) slapstick to cover mush, (2) mush, and more particularly the type that ends in a ringing plea for little men everywhere, the poor underprivileged little mussels in the shoals.

But that is outline merely. What gives the thing its modest warm charm is the easy way a situation appears and recedes, like the countryside from a train. And for all the weakness you may find in it, what you will see if you wish is a man working in pictures, deftly. The opening sequence is dialogue in the strictest sense of two people talking; but the talk is the good thing of common coin shined up and found anew like a lucky penny; the exposition needs no wheel chair; the play of feeling is gauged and fitted into motion like the escapement of a watch. And Dick Powell is the young man, the hopeful chump in love without a hope chest, and he does not bounce up and down once. Right there at the start of a picture you have it: anyone who can coax, trick or coerce Dick Powell into being a nice enough and ordinary guy completely free of a sandwich board saying KICK ME must be a man who can work with materials like a cabinet-maker, knowing both what it is and what it should be when finished. A director, in short.

It is of course a very bothersome thing that you can't see Direction in pictures like Dr. Stokowski on the podium ("the smith a mighty man is he with arms like rubber bands"); and that most of the directors who get known by way of theatre marquees are to the craftsmanship of telling a story with people and cameras what the writings of Walter B. Pitkin are to English prose style. But the fact is it not only goes on, it is the most important thing in pictures.

This is probably old stuff to many who go to films for pleasure, but I can't tell about that because they are obviously not the species of bird to be heard in all the

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chatter of reviewing, reviling, resurrecting-revering or merely retailing films constantly and everywhere, like rain. The general public becomes articulate only at the box office, but I've reason to believe that among these mute millions you'll find a good lacing of people who know a movie from a milkshake. And it is to them that the good film writers and directors must look, not for the fame, which is commercially calculable, or for the money, which is certainly not cornflakes, but for the appreciation of a job well done. They must be there, though doing the thing for them or speaking of it to them must often seem like talking with your head down a rain barrel.

OTIS FERGUSON

A Communication

A Statement from Pierre Cot

SIR: I read with great interest the article written by C. Bertrand Thompson, "I Saw France Fall" [The New Republic, December 9]. This article has to do, in part, with the insufficiency of French aeronautics. Mr. Thompson declares that "the heaviest responsibility in this matter is M. Cot's."

Mr. Thompson's thesis is that France was wrong in the years that preceded the war, in following what he calls "a policy of prototypes," tending to ensure constant improvement in design and preparation without expenditure for actual production.

Obviously, I have no intention of describing here, in a few lines, the aeronautical policy of France from 1936 to 1940. I want only to show Mr. Thompson that his opinion is based on unexact and incomplete documentation and pro-fascist propaganda repeated everywhere in France and out of France in order to fight the Ministers of the Popular Front.

First: Mr. Thompson declares that General Gamelin was placed at the head of the General Staff by Daladier for political reasons. "There were three possible leaders," he writes. "The only real choice was General Weygand, but he was anathema to the leftist majority." This is the thesis that the pro-fascist press has tried to put forth, but the truth is different. It was *not* M. Daladier, Minister of War in the Popular Front, who named General Gamelin head of the General Staff. General Gamelin was named long before the Popular Front government, by a rightist Minister of War under a Conservative government; and there was no question at that moment of keeping General Weygand, who had arrived at the age limit and was obliged, by law, to leave the army.

Second: Mr. Thompson accuses me of having continued the bad policy, inaugurated by M. Marcel Deat, "through the critical years of 1937 and 1938." This is part of the same pro-fascist thesis intended to make me responsible for the bad state of French aviation at the beginning of the war. As the life of an army plane is at the most eighteen months, such propaganda must maintain that I directed the Air Ministry in 1938. I left the Air Ministry in January, 1938. It is incorrect to blame me for the insufficiency of the aeronautical production of France during the eighteen months that preceded the war.

Third: While defending the principle of the forty-hour week, Mr. Thompson declares that "in the majority of plants output was decreased." This affirmation is a favorite of the pro-fascist propagandists who accuse the government of the Popular Front of having reduced industrial production. But you only have to open the Statistical Yearbook of the League of Nations to realize that in 1936 and 1938 the industrial production of France increased. If you compare the general index of this production for the year 1937 (Léon Blum government) with the general index for the year 1935 (Pierre Etienne Flandin and Pierre Laval governments), you find an increase of 12 percent in favor of the first. The average increase is 35 percent for these basic products: pig-iron, steel, aluminum, chemicals, engineering, metallurgy.

What Mr. Thompson reproaches France for is an aeronautical production inferior in quantity to that of the German production. He is right. At the beginning of the war the German aviation was about six times more powerful and numerous than the French. British aviation was about twice as powerful. What is the explanation?

The Vichy government uses the well known theme of the scapegoats; but this explanation satisfies no one.

The truth is to be found in the credits allotted to military aviation in France, England and Germany. From 1936 to 1939 France spent $1,100,000 for her military aviation, England $2,100,000 and Germany $7,500,000.

The question—the real question of responsibility—is why France did not attribute more importance to aviation.

The answer to this question has two parts: first, France is less of an industrial nation than Germany. France, in 1938, had 6,000,000 workers and Germany 26,000,000, four and a half times as many. The most important raw material for the construction of airplanes is aluminum. In 1938 France produced 45,000 tons of aluminum and Germany, 166,000 tons. With the same industrial effort, French aeronautical industry could not then have produced more than one-fifth or one-sixth the number of airplanes that Germany produced.

Second, the French and German General Staffs had different policies. The Germans prepared specially for the Blitzkrieg, and the Blitzkrieg is based upon the mass use of tanks and of airplanes. France prepared specially for a defensive war based on the use of fortified lines and defensive weapons. With two different war conceptions, France and Germany prepared two different types of war material.

If the documentation of Mr. Thompson had been more complete, he would have known that in 1936 and 1938 I did not cease to protest against the tendencies of the Ministry of National Defense to give less importance to aviation than England or Germany were giving.

I hope that this letter suggests to Mr. Thompson and to the readers of The New Republic, that the question of the bad preparation of the war in France should not be judged rapidly and superficially. To crush the leaders of the French democracy, German and Vichy propaganda tries to create legends. The legend of the incompetence of the Ministers of the Popular Front is one which democratic Americans should be wary of accepting.

New York City PIERRE COT

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The Bandwagon

Don't give up to gloom when clouds are blackest. Do what good works may lie in your way, to dispel the gloom for your fellow and your Country. If we keep our Faith and Hope they will probably geep us. For they usually do.

So again a Happy New Year to one and all. – *Editorial in The New Orleans Item.*

Mayor Leo J. Rogers of Trenton, New Jersey, who is also Director of Public Safety, has established a vice squad of six policemen to protect Fort Dix soldiers from predatory women. Two policewomen will have the job of peeking into bars to frighten away other undesirable females. – *News item in PM.*

The People's Choice?

I am an Irish-Cherokee Indian; like my forefathers that have long since gone to their happy hunting ground, I am proud of being the original American. . . . If and when I become Mayor of Los Angeles I will give all business houses just 24 hours to discharge non-citizens and replace them with Americans, or I will revoke their licenses, forthwith. I believe that a person should be disfranchised from his American citizenship that will give our jobs to foreigners. . . .

I believe a Red Light District is essential. We will run these women of the world out of our apartments where decent people live, put them under medical supervision, then our wives, daughters and sisters can venture on the street without being molested. This our fair sex cannot do today. Citizens, I plead with you, it is time to wake up and stop being narrow-minded. We need a reform government. Under this form of better government there cannot be any political corruption.

I am not a politician. I am an Idealist—RED LIGHTS, OPEN GAMBLING, OLD AGE PENSION WITHOUT TAXATION and NO REFUGEES. – *Mimeographed chain letter sent out by G. Collins Terry, candidate for Mayor of Los Angeles.*

Stool-Puppy

Police were summoned late Saturday to the home of Harold C. Eustis, vice-president of the H. and S. Pogue Company, 6 Elmhurst Place, when Mrs. Eustis discovered a dog playing in her front yard with what appeared to be a bomb. . . . The dog was released after questioning. – *News item in The Cincinnati Times-Star.*

Total-Defense Department

The Oakland Port Commission, the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce have waged a stubborn fight to prevent the army from taking over the choice frontage and harbor on the ground that it is "vital to national defense." – *From The San Francisco Chronicle.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Writers and Troll-Nests

SIR: May I quibble, good-naturedly, with Edmund Wilson over some of the generalizations with which he concluded the interesting series on California writers? The final article ("The Californians," The New Republic, December 16) was the weakest, principally because he chose to pursue the too-easy sport of baiting Californians (southern) at the expense of his criticism.

"All visitors from the East know the strange spell of unreality which seems to make human experience on the Coast as hollow as the life of a troll-nest where everything is out in the open instead of being underground." *Is* the life of a troll-nest "hollow," or does it only *seem* so to Eastern tourists? Would human experience on the Coast be any less hollow if everything were underground (as in Eastern troll-nests) instead of out in the open?

Other places than California cast "strange spells of unreality," as the critic admits in mentioning one brand of New York "insubstantiality." I can even hear a highly intelligent New York lawyer who has come to New York from New Hampshire confess, in the fashion of Mr. Wilson's Californian from Colorado, that he pinches himself periodically to remind himself that he is living in a sensational world which he ought to get down on paper, but that he can never pull out of the trance sufficiently to react and to judge in what he still at the back of his mind considers the "normal way" (*i. e.*, according to the standards of his home-town Main Street and the "normalized" patterns of his New England school and college). But has my friend illuminated the problems of the writer in New York?

Mr. Wilson's remarks concerning the contribution of the climate to the West Coast "unreality" shed more light on his own personality, I suspect, than on the problems facing California writers. Do not day and night revolve with "hypnotic rhythms"—even sometimes with "unblurred intensity"—elsewhere than in California? Has the Pacific a monopoly on "surf which seems to roll up the beach with a purposeless expressionless beat"?

The contrast between the "spirits" of San Francisco and Los Angeles is amusing, as always; but is it a reliable or even usable criterion for judging the novels produced in or near either city, unless it implies a theory of literary determinism by cities or regions? Is the situation of the writer in California so different from that of the writer in Michigan, for example, where "gigantic and vulgar" Detroit prevails over its "real" cultural centers like Ann Arbor? Has not "the great anti-cultural amusement-producing" emporium of New York drained "the soil of the imaginative life" of the Northeast from its "real" cultural centers, such as Portland, Boston, Hartford, Philadelphia, etc., with results recognizably similar to those on the West Coast? Does Mr. Wilson really feel that the citations from Storm's "Count Ten" justify our believing that the Californian confronts a problem of giving "his literary personality reality" which is uniquely difficult? Is it so much easier to show the beauty and sense in the purposes and passions of humanity in Jersey City, South Chicago, New Haven or Miami?

The censure of Los Angeles writers for their failure to muster "the gumption to lay bare the heart and bowels of the moving-picture industry" sounds suspiciously like the principle that "gumption" is more important than skill for the literary anatomist.

Waterville, Me. STEPHEN LARRABEE

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The Isolationist Argument

SIR: In view of your pronounced editorial policy, and of many statements appearing in your columnists' contributions supporting the presidential policy of "all out" and unneutral material and moral assistance to the beleaguered British government, it may be of interest to your readers to learn that recent confirmation has reached me from two quarters of the authenticity of the profoundly penetrating observation of the Hon. Winston Churchill, now Prime Minister of Great Britain, to the effect that had America stayed out of the World War the then Allied governments "would have made peace with Germany in the spring of 1917, thus saving over a million British, French, American and other lives, and preventing the subsequent rise of fascism and Nazism."

That statement, breath-taking in its implications, and as true today as it was in 1936, or 1917, reflects a very general opinion among government and informed circles in England until the opening of the present criminal war, as the writer knows not only from his own personal contacts with journalists and others, in London, but also from the testimony of an American first secretary of legation, of many years' service in the Department of State, who heard Mr. Churchill's son-in-law, Dennis Sandys, express himself in exactly the same manner, in the summer of 1939. The statement quoted was made by Winston Churchill on August 11, 1936, to William Griffin, owner of The New York Enquirer, a publication which specializes in racing information, and which is published on Sunday evenings.

Arlington, Va. BRENT DOW ALLINSON

[In the year just closed, a number of people, notably many Frenchmen who were entrusted with the responsibility of preserving the independence of their country, acted on the assumption that 1940 was 1917. They were mistaken. – THE EDITORS]

Questions from a Young Man

SIR: The question in my mind these troubled days is what have I to fight or sacrifice for in order to stop fascism? I see no great future in saving the Britain of unemployment, the Britain of India, the Britain prior to this war. I see no security in our present America with its unemployment.

Like many other young Americans who are of military age, I would like to know just what we will be fighting for if we are called to serve our country.

I love the liberties that we Americans have and I will fight foreign or domestic enemies to preserve them; but what is the Bill of Rights to the unemployed?

I want the leaders of this country to state, with all the clearness possible, the type of world that they wish us to sacrifice for. Will there be a just peace? What steps will be taken to avoid the necessity of future wars? Will there be work and security following peace?

Libby, Mont. K. T. BOLLES

How Much Is a Man Worth?

SIR: You are to be commended for continuing to publicize the appalling results of careless mining in this country ("Obituary Notice," The New Republic, January 6) and the urgent need for federal action.

I had an opportunity once to discuss a state inspector's report with a mine foreman. We were several hundred feet below the earth's surface, in a soft-coal mine in Pennsylvania. I was noting aloud my reactions—for example, there was a gem of a small machine which cut through the coal bank as neatly as ham is cut in the corner shop by the butcher's slicing machine, and I got the thrill that comes from an excellent performance. But in an adjoining space, where the ceiling was so low we had to move about bent over from the waist, a man was laboriously picking at the coal walls. The foreman explained that mining in such coves was particularly dangerous, and that such a machine cost $1,500.

My escort took from his pocket a state inspector's report on violations, and read it item by item. It called for whitewashing the track intersections to prevent head-on collisions in the black underground and for making certain recesses more commodious in the coal walls adjacent to the tracks, so that workers might seek safety in them at the approach of trains. It called attention, among a long list of citations, to the prohibition of workers riding out of the mines on loaded coal cars at the end of the shift. The foreman said that nothing would be done about any of these violations.

New York City ESTELLE LAUDER

Defense Is Design

SIR: France went down because she refused to think industrially but clung to a pre-industrial pattern of thought compounded of landowning, shopkeeping, politics and art.

Defense is design, and good design is possible only when pre-industrial notions that grew out of hand-tailored technics are tossed overboard. France made aircraft as we used to make Prince Alberts and still make houses. The furor over the inadequate design of our fighting craft is nothing to the furor that should be raised over the continued application of handicraft traditions and design to shelter. Shelter is a world need that can be met only with industrial design for machine production, easy and low-cost distribution, within levels of existing average mass income.

Flint, Mich. CORWIN WILLSON

From The New Republic Mail Bag

"Words cannot describe the situation in Spain," writes an Englishman, who has recently left that country, to a New Republic friend. "People were lying about, dying of starvation. Money was valueless; only food or cigarettes counted. One scarcely heard Spanish spoken, only German. We were seven English and one Swiss and we flew to Lisbon in a German plane with an Italian pilot. The plane was supposed to be Spanish."

In sympathy with the objectives of the New Deal, but distressed by what he feels was a distorted picture of the role of insurance companies in American life, David N. Fields, New York City, discusses Stephen Carter's "Whose Insurance Companies?" (The New Republic, December 30). "The premium rates for most policies today are based on the assumption that investments will yield 3.5-percent interest. Actual earnings in most of the large companies for 1939 were about 3.75 percent. The margin of safety is .25 percent. Compelling the investment of insurance funds at a rate less than that used in computing premiums would mean insolvency with legislative approval."

Carrying on Ralph Waldo Nelson's suggestion for Senators-at-large (The New Republic, December 16), Arthur S. Heineman, Los Angeles, proposes a Third House: The Assembly of Interests. He says we have it now, in the form of the lobby, and that it is underhanded and sinister, although its objectives are mostly legitimate. He would bring it into the open, and give it, chiefly, the power of initiating legislation, clearly subordinate to the other three branches.

H. A. Whipple, of Atlanta, is nearer the immediate and the tangible with a commendation for D. H. Palmer's "Automobiles of 1941" (The New Republic, December 30) and a warning to motorists that they need no longer buy radiator coverings for winter use. Supply dealers are still trying to sell them, he says, although most cars now have thermostatic temperature control which makes them unnecessary.

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Books in Review

Death of a Hero

IN ADDITION to being a fine novel, "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is also an interesting and very complicated political and moral document. More attention should be paid to this side of it, for all the able reviews that the book has already received.[1] The truth is that Hemingway has always been concerned with ideas, even when his critics took it for granted that he was dealing with purely visceral processes; and for many years his work had more effect on the thinking of young Americans than that of any professional philosopher. In his latest book, the ideas are handled more directly. He is trying here not only to write his best novel, but also to state and justify an attitude toward the Spanish revolution, and toward the whole set of beliefs that dominated the 1930's, besides implying an attitude toward what has happened since his story ended. It is an ambitious undertaking, but then Hemingway has written a very long book, and everything is there if you look for it.

The hero, Robert Jordan, is an American college instructor who had always spent his vacations in Spain and could speak the language without an accent. He joined the Loyalists when the war broke out, "because it had started in a country that he loved, and he believed in the Republic and that if it were destroyed life would be unbearable for all those people who believed in it." He had no politics, as he often told himself; his only creed was liberty, equality and fraternity. And yet, "He was under Communist discipline for the duration of the war . . . because, in the conduct of the war, they were the only party whose program and whose discipline he could respect."

That explains the nature of the People's Front in Spain, but it is not by any means the whole story. For Jordan was also united to the Communists by a deeply religious emotion, "something like the feeling you expected to have and did not have when you made your first communion. It was a feeling of consecration to a duty toward all the oppressed of the world," and it gave you "a part in something that you could believe in wholly and completely and in which you felt an absolute brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it. . . . Your own death seemed of complete unimportance; only a thing to be avoided because it would interfere with the performance of your duty. But the best thing was that there was something you could do about this feeling and this necessity too. You could fight."

That explains the spirit of the International Brigades, but again it is not the whole story. For Jordan also discovered that "in the fighting soon there was no purity of feeling for those who survived the fighting and were good at it. Not after the first six months." The gradual corruption of the survivors, including himself, is a point he makes often and with great subtlety. He has noted that the Republican leaders are mostly vain and incompetent and capable of betraying the people they are supposed to be saving; he has noted that the people themselves, whom he loves, are cruel and irresponsible; and especially he has noted that the Russians coming to help them are living in well guarded luxury at Gaylord's Hotel while joking about the hardships suffered by the Spanish soldiers. "He liked to know how it really was; not how it was supposed to be"; and meanwhile he was trying to fit all these elements together into a private philosophy of action.

It might be called the philosophy of Nevertheless, and I suppose it is the only possible philosophy for a fighting man who also wants to remain intelligent and clear-sighted. Jordan tells himself that there are good and evil on his side; *nevertheless* he has balanced them together and has found that the good predominates. He will not reveal the evil he has seen, because by doing so he would injure his cause; *nevertheless* he will not close his eyes to it. And although his whole course of action may eventually prove useless, *nevertheless* he will continue fighting till the end of the war. Then, at some later date, he will satisfy his political and literary conscience by writing a book—"only about the things he knew, truly, and about what he knew. But I will have to be a much better writer than I am now to handle them, he thought. The things he had come to know in this war were not so simple."

We can take for granted that "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is the sort of "true book" that Robert Jordan would have written if he had survived. And because he belongs to the long line of Hemingway's semi-autobiographical heroes, we can take for granted that he is speaking for the author, who also played his part in the Spanish war. But this, once again, is not the whole story. Jordan cannot speak for him completely, since the author himself has changed since the defeat of the cause for which his hero died. Something of his later philosophy or his changed feeling toward life has also gone into the book, and that is what makes it such a complicated document.

The new attitude is never directly expressed, but it is implicit in the choice of characters and events and in the whole mood of the story. From the first chapter to the last, one feels a continual sense of doom, so that reading the book is almost like watching an express train pounding at full speed toward an open drawbridge. The hero has to die by emotional necessity, because he has become the symbol of a dying cause. But most clearly of all, Hemingway's new feeling about the war is revealed by the double irony of this death. Robert Jordan pays with his life for dynamiting a bridge, in order to assure the success of a Loyalist offensive, although he already knows that the offensive will be a failure. That is the first irony. But even at the moment of his death, he wants to carry on the fight, telling himself that if he holds the enemy back a little while or merely shoots the officer, "that may make all the difference." Painfully wounded, fighting back the desire to kill himself and thus avoid being taken and tortured, he lies there with his submachine gun pointed at the road. Now it happens that

[1] See especially Edmund Wilson's discerning article in The New Republic of October 28.

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among the Rebels mentioned in the book, one officer has been singled out as a modest, brave and religious man, exactly the sort that Jordan admires. And by the second irony, this is the officer killed with Jordan's last clip of bullets.

Years ago, in an often quoted passage of "A Farewell to Arms," Hemingway had said that he "was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice, and the expression in vain." Now apparently he has written a whole book to explain the meaning of the word "sacrifice" and the phrase "in vain." Yet even that is not the whole story. For Hemingway also seems to be saying that human beings are not in vain; that they are always worth more than any cause for which they die. He seems to be saying, less persuasively, that love is not in vain, especially when enjoyed in the face of danger. And finally, by the immense care with which he has written this book, certainly the best and richest of his novels, he seems to be saying that honesty and careful craftsmanship are not in vain. These apparently are the principles to which he clings in the ruin of our times.

MALCOLM COWLEY

The Job in the White House

The President: Office and Powers, by Edward S. Corwin. New York University Press. 488 pages. $5.

AFTER alternately worshiping and reviling particular Presidents, we now seem ready prayerfully to study the office. The book under review is one of at least four that have appeared recently on the presidency. If this augurs a minor boom in presidency books, I like it much more than I liked the spate of "democracy" books: for if American democracy is to survive we shall have to make or keep it strong at particular strategic points. And who can doubt that the presidency is today the nub of the matter, at least so far as political institutions go? Never in history has the success of a whole way of life depended to so great a degree upon a single office. I say "office" rather than "man," because what we are dealing with here is not some specific incumbent but the job itself, a continuing job in what is likely to prove a continuing crisis, a job so big that even the biggest men we have had have not been cramped in it.

There are two major ways of looking at the presidential job. Professor Corwin takes one way—a constitutional study of the important aspects of the office (chief executive, administrative chief, commander-in-chief, foreign-affairs chief, popular and legislative leader), of the powers that have been claimed for it, and of the problems of selection and tenure that it raises. His approach merits comparison with that of Harold Laski's "American Presidency," published a few months earlier and already reviewed in these pages. While Corwin's work is rich in marginal discussions of personalities, politics and the history of ideas, they are definitely marginal, while the analysis of the legal limits of power is kept central. The result is a book with an astringent and deflating quality. And a rather funereal quality too, especially in the discussion of the current presidency; for Corwin sees it as resting on the ruins of three of the major constitutional principles—separation of powers, no congressional delegation of power, and a balanced federalism.

In contrast, Laski's book was affirmative and almost optimistic. Laski saw the presidency as the spearhead of the "positive" state, alone capable of furnishing the leadership to carry us without violence through the transition period. Where Corwin sees *powers* through the eyes of one who has steeped himself in Supreme Court decisions, Laski saw *power* through the eyes of a democratic collectivist. And here more than anywhere else, the whole (presidential power) has been and must be more than the sum of the constituent parts.

I do not mean to decry Corwin's achievement, which is massive. His erudition (there are nearly 150 pages of notes) all but silences criticism, and he is one of the few writers whose notes I find meaty and often entertaining. The structure of the book, to be sure, seems loose and contrived rather than organic, and I suspect that more people are likely to consult it than read it. But Corwin's qualities—a critical yet far-roving mind, a combination of the magisterial and the charming in manner—shine through the apparatus of scholarship. He has made his book indispensable to the student of both American law and American politics. His sensitiveness to the danger zones of constitutional tension was shown when in 1935 he wrote "The Twilight of the Supreme Court." It is notable that he now believes that "the center of gravity of our constitutional system" lies in the relation between the President and Congress, and—in order to make it a more workable one—suggests reshaping the Cabinet to include congressional leaders, men "who could bring the presidential whim under an independent scrutiny which today is lacking."

Where the book is disappointing is in its major assumptions about American government. I say "assumptions," because I won't quarrel with a constitutional scholar if he doesn't include cosmic discussions of political theory in his book. But even a constitutional discussion will often take its color from the "inarticulate major premises" of political theory. And what I miss in Corwin's book is the premise, articulate or otherwise, of a democratic dynamism. It is not enough to say, "constitutionally, the President may go thus far and no further." The problem is rather, "given the huge job the President has, how can a flexible Constitution that is a real instrument of government enable him to get enough power to do the job? And how can an administrative system help him to pool intelligence and organize will on a nationwide scale?" Corwin says the principal merit of his plan for a new Cabinet is that it will bring in men not dependent on the President. But it is not the crucial thing today to find No-men to check the President's will. We have plenty of those in Congress, in business, in the press. We have ample checks already on the President's power. What we want is a conception of the presidency big enough for the job, and then the machinery to carry out the conception. This is not to argue for an opportunistic surrender of plenary power to the presidency. There must be safeguards. But they should not be of the check-and-balance variety, but the safeguards provided by a majority will operating within a civil-liberties tradition.

Corwin's present emphasis is curious in view of his "Twilight of the Supreme Court," which was one of the most cogent statements of the proposition that the Constitution is an instrument for achieving positive values, and that the Court must not be allowed to interpose obstacles

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to the majority will. I miss a similar instrumental view in the present book. I wonder whether I am wrong in detecting in it a somewhat tired feeling, as if the writer, taking a long historical perspective of the attempts to achieve a strong presidency, felt in confronting the present administration that this was where he came in. Actually, the historical perspectives are what give the book a good deal of its value. The analysis of the constitutional conceptions of the presidency held by Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, T. R. and Wilson gives a new slant to the history of the presidency as a story of "discontinuous aggrandizement." One might add also, discontinuous creativeness. It is worth noting, in passing, that Corwin does not consider F. D. R. as important a figure as Jackson, Lincoln or Wilson. His argument may depress or cheer, depending on the viewpoint.

At any rate, the President's job will more and more in the immediate future become a dual one—that of exercising oversight of a far-flung administrative network, the parts of which must be kept harmonious with each other; and that of leadership, of imparting will and energy and direction to a government. To accommodate both of these functions the constitutional limits of the President's power will be stretched in the years to come. Fortunately, as concerns the presidency, the Constitution is not a straitjacket. Corwin gives a striking account of the way in which Lincoln as War President, knowing that the Union would not survive unless he tapped new sources of national powers for himself, found what he wanted in the President's role as Commander-in-Chief. He presented the Court with a *fait accompli*, and history has ratified it. It would be much better for us to envisage ahead of time the possibilities of other crises such as Lincoln's. If we take a flexible and creative view of the presidency to start with, we may be able to minimize the shock of Lincoln's sort of constitutional dictatorship. For that is what the presidency, a prisoner in peacetime of the press and Congress and the party system, tends to become in wartime. MAX LERNER

Frank O'Connor as Novelist

Dutch Interior, by Frank O'Connor. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 277 pages. $2.50.

YEARS AGO, Mr. Frank O'Connor established himself in England as a writer of extraordinary power with his first book, "Guests of the Nation," a collection of short stories dealing with The Troubles. This book, in fact, along with Joyce's "Dubliners" and O'Flaherty's "Spring Sowing," three volumes by Irishmen, probably contain the highest achievements in the art of the contemporary short story in the English language. Yet the name of Frank O'Connor does not appear to be well known in this country.

Publishers, however—or is it the public?—will not allow an author to write short stories indefinitely. Books of stories, he is told, do not sell. Novels sometimes do. So how is the story-writer to solve the problem? If he finds himself still writing stories he may call these stories chapters, and turn out something that may be called a novel. Now it would be unfair to accuse Mr. O'Connor of having done just this in "Dutch Interior"; but the fact remains that we see the Devanes, the Longs and their friends—poverty-stricken families in their dreary Cork homes—through a series of very loosely related chapters, some of which are in themselves superb, self-contained stories. The technique has its advantages: every word has to be read; but in a novel the constant introduction of new characters is hampering and confusing and requires great concentration from the reader.

When the book opens, Stevie and Peter, two of the main characters, are boys suffering from hardship and poverty, and from a vindictive father half-mad with hatred of living; and when it closes, these two are middle-aged men, both lonely and tired of life, in a town where it is always raining, where there are no distractions from the dullness of living—a town of eternal trams, of latrines, and neglected, beautiful Georgian houses. During that time, Ned, Stevie's brother, has died, coughing up his lungs "in a bed painted red with blood." Gus, a friend, has left for America and returned, disillusioned, only to be swindled and disillusioned again in the country he loves and hates.

"Dutch Interior"—an unfortunate title, for surely a Vermeer, a Ter Borch, does not suggest the squalor, drabness and the everlasting domestic crises of O'Connor's Ireland—is a very sad book. There are passages of great beauty; too many, perhaps, just as there are too many characters, for so brief a novel. And there are many moments of such rhetorical dialogue, of such drama, that the reader who knows his Irish Players feels he is seeing the characters on the stage. One cannot help but have a vision of Arthur Sinclair, facing Sarah Allgood, as the father yells "with a scream of blasphemous passion. . . . 'Smothered him, be Jaaaases! Smothered him in his own blood!'"

Ireland has produced great dramatists, and this novel leaves the impression that Frank O'Connor has in him all that is required for first-rate theatre. JAMES STERN

Plato Among the Marxists

The Genesis of Plato's Thought, by A. D. Winspear. New York: The Dryden Press. 348 pages. $3.

THIS IS Professor Winspear's second book on the interconnection of politics and philosophy in the late fifth century before Christ. The first, entitled "Who Was Socrates?" received much wider notice in reviews outside of the scholarly journals than any book on Plato or Socrates for many a long day. This book, like the other, will probably get a lot of panning in the scholarly journals. From various sidelong observations in his text, I conclude that the author expects this and puts it down to the unconscious social bias of his academic reviewers. There is a tendency on the part of the academic mind, one gathers from Mr. Winspear, to resent evidence of any connection between the processes of thought and their economic or political genesis. Thus not only, according to Mr. Winspear, would the academic mind be likely to reject indignantly an analysis of Plato's class bias as the proper way to set about understanding his philosophy, but they would also reject indignantly proof that the direction of Plato's metaphysical speculation is to be traced to his class bias.

I agree with Mr. Winspear that he is extremely liable to be ill treated by his academic reviewers, and for the most part unfairly treated. It seems to me questionable whether the ill treatment would proceed as directly as he indicates from class bias, but it certainly is related to another derived

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phenomenon—the dislike of the average college teacher for complicating the pleasantly abstract intellectual proposition by considerations of life as it has ever existed in this world. In so far as he honestly attempts to bring to our attention matters of personal life, political preference and social association in analyzing Plato's thought, Mr. Winspear has made a courageous effort to do a necessary job.

There are, however, two very serious objections to be raised on another score. The first is that frequently Mr. Winspear's evidence amounts to proof only when his own basic hypotheses are accepted on faith and applied mechanically. For instance, he quotes Aristoxenus' account of Pythagoras' conception of justice: "Pythagoras, wishing to demonstrate that in the midst of the unequal, the asymmetrical and the indefinite justice was present as a principle of limit of equality and symmetry, and at the same time wishing to teach men how to practise justice, said that it [justice] was like that figure which alone of geometrical diagrams, although it has an infinity of shapes and is formed of sides unequal in their mutual relations, always presumes the demonstration of the right angle." Mr. Winspear comments: "This in other words is an account of the famous Pythagorean theorem. The relation with social problems, in particular the problem of justice, is very clear. . . . It is important to notice that in Pythagoras' use of this mathematical demonstration of the nature of justice, it is not, in his view, any part of the function of justice to remove inequality." Now, it is patently true that a mathematician is still a politically minded individual and that sometimes, but not always, there is a certain intellectual similarity in his mathematical and political propositions. (This, in fact, is all that Mr. Winspear claims on p. 95.) But what Mr. Winspear is implying all the time is *not* that a mathematician like Pythagoras most commonly has the political beliefs of Pythagoras; but that Pythagoras is the kind of mathematician he *is* because he has the sort of political beliefs that Pythagoras has. And that, I submit, is not proved by the evidence unless one accepts on faith a very simple view of causation, namely, that everything a man does, thinks or feels can be directly explained by a reference to his social origins.

If Mr. Winspear decides to interpret the mass of evidence in the light of an oversimplified Marxism, that may justify the reader in rejecting the book on the personal grounds of disagreement with the central hypothesis. It would not justify adverse criticism of the author as a faulty expositor of his own doctrine. But Mr. Winspear both implicitly and explicitly insists upon the superior validity of his theory of cause and effect in social life: this, he says, is scientific, whereas the others are the product of prejudice and class bias. It is, in consequence, a particularly serious criticism of this book to affirm that in scarcely a single case discussed does the evidence justify the author's generalization without the aid of Marxist dialectic, hauled in like the god from the machine.

The second objection is that Mr. Winspear is inspired by a kind of white-hot moral passion which frequently dulls his claim to scientific objectivity. It is true that the book is called "The Genesis of Plato's Thought," and that ostensibly it seeks only to show the interdependence of Plato's political and other than political philosophy. Actually it tries to do far more. It tries to show that Plato's view both of justice and the state was wrong because he was one of the rich and affiliated with the "landed reactionary element." I do not deny that Plato may have been, and probably was, wrong in his view of the state. But nothing is proved about such wrongness by showing that Plato was an aristocrat and held an aristocratic conception of life. That aristocratic way of life can be denied or refuted only in the carefully formulated terms of another and democratic way of life, and the denial or refutation is no scientific matter.

What Mr. Winspear implicitly accepts is a theory of history and human development which never comes out in the open but is used as the ultimate footrule; the norm of man is the happy proletarian and the norm of the state the proletarian state, and Plato's attacks on both of these are due to his unnatural and perverse bias. Thus one at once explains Plato's bias as the natural outcome of his position in society and enjoys a warming sense of right morality in censuring him for this bias. This, of course, introduces all kinds of distortion into the book. Instead of trying to understand the very complicated relation between the parts of "The Republic" and the whole, the attempt to explain theoretically the construction of a state from the economic interdependence of a few families to the consummation in the philosopher king, Mr. Winspear takes any ammunition that any part of the book furnished him with as a God-sent gift.

For example, the "noble lie," which is an impossibility in the perfected state but a part of the toy model state which Socrates is building in the earlier books of "The Republic," is treated as a serious political suggestion. "The Republic," as a whole, is considered not as a laborious, tentative and subtle delineation of political possibilities but as a political pamphlet to be of immediate usefulness to the Conservatives. The first book, with its sophistic refutations of current positions about justice—particularly Thrasymachus' position on justice—is interpreted as a series of childish attacks on the "progressive philosophy" (the formula is the author's own). It should have struck Mr. Winspear that some of the parts of this argument which he so easily shows are "dyslogistic" are perhaps a little too dyslogistic to be Plato's serious effort. The whole point of the first book is to show that without defining one's terms and basing justice on nature, any of the customary glib formulations of what justice or injustice is, and whether each respectively brings happiness or unhappiness, is useless, since such vagueness surrounds the conventional views that their opposites may be accepted without a consciousness of mental reversal in those who put them forward.

The examples of crude misinterpretation and even misunderstanding can be multiplied from any part of Mr. Winspear's book. Whatever may be thought of the merits of the general philosophy of history involved, or the opposition between the "conservative" philosophy (which is of course idealistic, "metaphysical" and, by implication, wicked) and the "progressive" philosophy (which is materialistic, pragmatic and, by implication, excellent), certainly the analysis of the arguments in "The Republic" gives no evidence of clear thought, much less of sympathetic effort to find out what Plato was trying to say. And such an effort at sympathetic understanding is a *sine qua non* to any interpretation of Plato. DAVID GRENE

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He Should of Stood in Bed

The Donkey Inside, by Ludwig Bemelmans. New York: The Viking Press. 224 pages, illustrated. $3.

FOR LITERARY MEN and their publishers, especially in a vacation interim between novels, it seems the easiest thing in the world to write a travel book. It is not the easiest to read one. Certainly in this day of the sound and technicolor film, of elegants hopping out of the cafés of most of the world like bugs in a Flit ad and swarming into the more expensive bars in New York, of cruise schedules like local time-tables, plane connections and mass magazine circulation, there is nothing so stale as someone else's travel troubles and sights seen, minutes from the menu of Café Greaseball in St. Quelquechose, or Land Below the Belt.

Besides, travel narrows one so—or at least when undertaken in this busy, questing, notebook-and-galley-proof itinerary. The really enjoyable books about it are by the tendentious and delightful fibbers like Waugh and Fleming, who can do it well simply because they can do something else better in the first place, and should have stuck to it. The only thing you can do with most of the stuff is square a birthday rap with Aunt Hattie, who developed a known and morbid interest in Rhodesia as one of the by-products of a Dollar round-the-world junket in 1927. And I hold that the type of book which people give to other people because they have to give a gift should be discouraged and eventually wiped out.

Ludwig Bemelmans is no more at his best in travel than anyone else; but he is a contagious sort of a fellow, a writer with precise and vivid prose, love and knowledge, and his book of several journeys about South America becomes one of the best in the field. He chooses Ecuador as a focal point for the life of the continent. Being a man who could just naturally be turned loose in a morgue for deaf mutes and come out with more living, articulate people than I have been able to find in four novels by Henry James, he gets into his book explorers, petty officials, Indians, exiled diplomats, everybody. Being a man with a careful, studying painter's eye, he is able to pick out just the key to a scene from life, so that it opens before you at his touch in quick image: "This violent inn appears to have come out of a story conference of the Marx brothers," or, "Quito, the oldest city in the New World, is seemingly built over a sunken roller-coaster," or "Filomena [the baby donkey] was three feet high, with another foot of ears, all in wool as soft as a new chinchilla coat, with four white stockings and ebony hoofs. She wore a black mask across her face, and out of this shone her large, intelligent and stubborn female eyes. All in all it was a costume for 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' made to the specifications of Walt Disney."

As to the four two-page inserts of Bemelmans' painting, I like the one they use for the jacket, but the idea I get from his habit of line in general is of a lady with a broken garter, and I think it very fortunate that he is so exact and colorful an illustrator of his pictures in prose. The familiar Bemelmans humor is here—familiar but unique, a mixture of the wry and genial, the precise and understated and merry. Exhibit: the dangerous convict who persuaded his guard to let him buy a pound of flour to bake a cake in celebration of seeing his wife, exploded the bag in the guard's face and was seen no more for a year. The battleships A, B and C of the Ecuador navy ("The battleship A I have not seen for a long time, I do not know where it is, no one has seen it; perhaps we only have two"). This inn, that railroad, that particular "architectural disaster." The good modern wife who read in the American magazines about syphilis: " 'Do you know,' she says in the middle of the night, 'that ninety percent in this country have it and the other ten are getting it?' She is like a dictator when she says these things," the husband reports. They had finally sent their boy to his uncle in another city where temptation would be offered discreetly and supervised, and where he was embarrassed because he hadn't really been thinking of those things, and got it anyway. The Indian women who had never cooked any game but chicken and sat all day in their eternal patience, trying to pluck the rabbit.

But Bemelmans is not simply a humorist: wherever he goes he is able to report the place and what goes on in it, and so unobtrusive are his sound judgment and almost shy feeling that places, people and customs speak for themselves —the steam-bath beauty of the tropics, the danger, vexations and rewards, the serene charm of the natives and their misery, the constant reminder of rival industrialisms, Germany and the United States, both a mixture of the necessary and the threatening. When you think back over it, he has never put the usual footrule on a person or a place, or the country in general. What is there, observed with all the wit and tolerance in the world, with a happy understanding and an eye like a gimlet, is there in the book.

What I am getting around to saying about Bemelmans and travel books generally is that those which are not openly misleading and of any service to you as a traveler, make the dullest reading; that those few lively accounts of unsentimental journeys which stand on their own are the worst possible guides. You could go step for step in the Bemelmans track without seeing such wonders or meeting such people or having so many doors fly open. You are not so blessed, in particular; and in general it is a fact that any country is either its people's feeling for it or your feeling for it as you learn to know it, and that these are things that cannot be had ready-made.

In a sense, any reading matter that gets nearer than Baedecker to such things approaches fiction, which is after all the truest home of whatever of memory and of thirst for the different and of hope is played to by the travel book. And the good writer of fiction is not so free here, is slowed up by dull facts. In the resultant compromise between the vision of the tipsy ocelot and the entry proving that the train got to Los Dos Ojos at 4:17, there arises a certain reader's tedium. This is an enjoyable book, all right. I read every word of it and reread several, which is quite a lot to say when you realize that my only possible reaction to accounts of the architecture in the Square of the Seven Virgins could never be more than, What, *that* many? But Bemelmans' other sketches of life remembered—the army, the hierarchy of his Splendide, the simple vacation, the world's people—contain higher peaks and more perilous jungles than the National Geographic Society ever heard of. He simply should not be encouraged to squander on time-tables this kind of talent, a way with the written image and a set of humors just different enough to be a little miraculous.

OTIS FERGUSON

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A Reader's List

BEHIND THE LINES: A BOOK OF POEMS, by A. A. Milne (Dutton, $1.75). Mr. Milne's graceful little muse, slightly disheveled and in a state of nervous tension, puts on her overalls and takes up her work: forty-three light and rather tripping pieces of Hitler, Mussolini, Ribbentrop, black-outs, the Athenia, butter, censorship, the RAF, etc. "No, it's not getting me down," she says, mopping her brow, "but oh, what a change from Christopher Robin!" Mr. Milne's footnotes are for the most part very tea-in-the-garden. The book relates to the first nine months of the war, and the great part of the verse has appeared in Punch.

WHY MEN BEHAVE LIKE APES AND VICE VERSA, by Earnest A. Hooton (Princeton University Press, $3). Harvard's irrepressible viewer-with-anthropological-alarm has another learned fling at the misdeeds of our biological evolution, in a volume from which the cautious reader may extract much valuable knowledge on behavior, simian and human. "I do not see," Dr. Hooton brightly comments, "how today any human being can look an ape in the eye and claim relationship on any behavioral basis. Any reputable ape would repudiate the imputation of a common ancestry with man."

THE PORT OF GLOUCESTER, by James B. Connolly (Doubleday, Doran, $3). A casual, intimate history of America's most famous fishing port from its discovery by Champlain in 1606 to the present. Fragmentary but colorful chapters on the town, the dangerous fishing industry that made it, the famous schooners and some of the 8,000 Gloucestermen who lost their lives at sea. This is the first book of a project called the Seaport Series—a fine idea off to a somewhat shaky start.

KING OF THE FUR TRADERS, by Stanley Vestal (Houghton, Mifflin, $3.50). A biography of Pierre Esprit Radisson, the greatest of the French *voyageurs*, who established the claims of France to half of North America in the seventeenth century. His experiences as explorer, trader, trapper, friend of the Indians and founder of the Hudson's Bay Company shame the inventions of most historical novelists. Unfortunately the author has bridged few of the gaps left by earlier biographers. The bibliography is excellent.

THE BIG CON, by David W. Maurer (Bobbs-Merrill, $2.50). A fascinating study of the techniques of the confidence man, with elaborate anecdotes of such characters as the Yellow Kid Weil, Little Chappie Lohr and Tear-off Arthur. On a superficial rather than a sociological level, but the author's easy amorality and the picturesqueness of his subjects make it entertaining reading. Has a twenty-one-page glossary of con slang, and needs it for such sentences as "The jug where his cush is is an eye gaff, and I'm afraid of Old Poison getting the beef."

WINGS OVER THE AMERICAS, by Alice Rogers Hager (Macmillan, $2.50). A newspaperwoman's sketchy log of a "Clipper" flight from Miami to Santiago, Chile, via Mexico and Central America; thence over the Andes, up the east coast of South America and back to the starting point with stops in the West Indies. What starts out as the story of American airmen pioneering some of the world's toughest routes, quickly becomes a cross between a travel folder and an investment prospectus for Pan American Airways.

CAREERS IN AVIATION, by Ben B. Follett (Waverly House, $2). A description of the various jobs in aviation from stewardess to pilot, the requirements for each and how to prepare to meet them, and the probable returns in terms of money, future and job satisfaction. There is also a brief summary of the government-sponsored flying program. Written like a sales manager's pep talk, but the author has a really fine and diversified background in aviation.

Contributors

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PIERRE COT, French Minister of Aviation from 1936 to 1938, is now in this country.

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